

It's **FREE!**

THE ULTIMATE DOOM III ISSUE - We went to Hell and back!

# GAMEALIS

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SEPTEMBER 2004 // \$PRICELESS/-

## THE CREEPIEST GAME ON EARTH

DOOM III HAS FINALLY INVADED EARTH.  
OUR BRAVE SUPER MARINE LIVES +@+ELL+HE+ALE.



ATTACK OF THE HANDSOME GUYS!

### Girl Power!

GameAxis have chosen the best-looking  
dudes from the games we played!



POKEMON WANTS YOU BACK!

### First Preview!

Pokemon is back in two Fiery Red  
and Leafy Green colors!

### Koichi Inoue

Interview Inside.

One of the Gundam Universe's founders talk  
to us at the recent HK Comics Festival Event.



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## When the editor's out, the mice, I mean the writer takes over...

Ok, I am positively bushed. The new mag and the revamp that took place since the last issue has taken a lot out of us but like what they say, when you look at the finished product, it just makes all the blood and sweat worth it.

Ok, gushing over, now that the September issue is officially over and done with and is now sitting pretty in your hands, I got to say that coming up with the September content was by no means a small task for us but we came through fine. September incidentally, is also to be the month of gamers what with events like the World Cyber Games 2004 and Planet Games coming up soon.

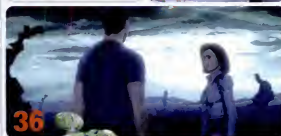
And this month's GameAxis is a chockfull of goodies as well, bringing you the latest in gaming buzz be it reviews, previews and the almighty cheat codes. There's something for everyone and for those who love continuity, there's the ongoing Warhammer 40,000 developer's diary that will give you a sneak peek into one of the more anticipated upcoming cult titles out there, as well as the Ragnarok Online drama-epic where we continue the adventures of Tellerin the idealistic acolyte.

So settle down, prop yourself on something comfortable, get a cuppa and discover the new stuff that we have put together for you this month. So who says good things are never free? You are holding one yourself!

Till then, happy gaming and be well.

Jason Woo  
Gaming Writer

If you want to give the person who wrote this piece of &^\*# a piece of your mind, email to [jasonwoo@hwzcorp.com](mailto:jasonwoo@hwzcorp.com)



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## REGULARS

- Press Start**  
Kudos and pans - we have got them all and you can read the best ones here
- News Byte**  
Grab your nuggets of gaming news here!
- Cover Story**  
The focus of the month AND the latest coffee shop talk as well.
- EndGame**  
Aww, it's the last page. We will miss you till the next month. But enjoy playing the game here.
- GAMES** (PC, CONSOLES, MOBILE, WEB-BASED, ONLINE, ARCADE)
- Pipeline**  
A glimpse of what's coming your way.
- ReviewsAxis**  
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Sick of dying for the umpteenth time? It's time for a dash of that Almighty favor. Eat your heart out Bruce Almighty.
- Hardware Haven**  
For a better gaming experience, check out our monthly picks.

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- Japan Inside (Anime, Manga)**  
Your local Animax programs synopsis.

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- Girl Power!**  
The dawn of the female revolution starts here.
- Go-Go Gadget!**  
Gizmos that will rock you for the next 30 days.
- ToyAxis**  
They are back! They are mean! They are toys!
- StyleAxis**  
The fashion police's latest endorsements.

## COMMUNITY

- Picture Perfect**  
Photos always say a thousand words. And we're too lazy to type the texts. Just kidding!
- Forum Discussions**  
What's buzz in our online chat rooms and online forums.



# Forum

Think you've got a bone to pick with a game developer for that insanely difficult game? Or just wanting to let your point get through to your fellow gamers? Maybe you just want to tell us how much we suck... I mean how much we rock? Send it all to [editorial@gameaxis.com](mailto:editorial@gameaxis.com) or join in the thousands of daily discussions in the GameAxis forums ([www.gameaxis.com/forums](http://www.gameaxis.com/forums)). And if we dig your hate/love mails or posts, you might just stand to win something really special from our friends.



## Doom is upon us!!

This month we cover some of the *analysis, graffiti and ramblings* on the latest FPS granddaddy to hit us - DOOM III. Anyone with a scant of childhood will no doubt remember the first two installments released in the early 90s by the Texan developers, id Software. With the release of the very itself an understatement) much awaited DOOM III, everyone is now in the mood to kill demons and send their asses back to Hell. GameAxis' forums are no exception and here is where we unearth some of the more interesting side-quips they have about the game.

### DOOM III satanic??

Read This  
([http://www.cogr.org/article\\_read.asp?id=584](http://www.cogr.org/article_read.asp?id=584))  
Stupid guy... rate the game 0/5 coz it is too satanic... what do u guys think?  
- **J5Acce, Member**

It's already been posted before but yeah that guy is one \*\*\*\* piece of crap. He claims the game is great etc... and then he gives it 0 because of Satanism...

- **SHODAN, Arch-Supremacy Member**

It is a tad satanic... really not suitable for Christians... what's the prob??  
He's reviewing from a religious perspective that's all...

- **KOK\_MAN1984, Member**

It's gaming from a Christian perspective what do you expect?

- **DurianShells, Arch-Supremacy Member**

Let's just say Carmack ain't exactly a church going American...

Anyway it's quite true... dun ask yr Christian frens over to yr house to play Doom3.... think will disturb them... esp. the hell levels...Dun tell me u didn't feel disturbed by some of the images...

- **KOK\_MAN1984, Member**

Perhaps shouldn't mix games with religions. Both are [on] different worlds.

- **Krupux, Senior Member**

Yea sure it is disturbing... especially when u play it with the lights off n no I wouldn't intentionally discuss this game with my Christian frenz. But I think it's really dumb to rate a game 0 solely becuz of religious issues...

- **J5Acce, Member**

Well, let's just say that the review isn't meant for us anyway....

Anyway I would recommend them to stay away from this title too... religion is a touchy topic...

- **KOK\_MAN1984, Member**

Actually he is not wrong to give that game a bad review, it certainly has too many suggestive satanic

scenes. He pointed out the good points but rated it low because it was from a Christian's point of view.

- **DurianShells, Arch-Supremacy Member**

That's why it is important to read the title before the content...

Don't cuss and screw the content because you have different opinions, see the starting point of the article and the intent of the author....

Not everyone can see eye to eye... everyone's different... just have to live with it...

- **KOK\_MAN1984, Member**

But the point is, gaming shouldn't mix with religion. Really, who rates a game according to how well it aligns with religion?

It's like almost every game would have to suffer an impact. Even strategy games like WC3 and RON don't agree with religion - WC3 has magika, which is against Christianity, and RON encourages war

But then yeah I agree, Doom 3 is really incredibly satanic

- **SHODAN, Arch-Supremacy Member**

Problem is when the actual core of the game itself is a travesty in itself to the religion, then hell yeah... they can at least say some thing about it....

WC3 and others is indirect conflict... Doom3 is direct reference to what they disapprove of...

Probably dun mix... but in other subtle ways it does too...

- **KOK\_MAN1984, Member**

Yes, he's rating the game based on a Christian's perspective and is justified on his giving it a zilch. So don't say, he's dumb.

- **eedward, Senior Member**

I agree with DurianShells and others here; I also feel people shouldn't be cussing at this particular review.

All reviews are biased to some degree; some slight, some very. That's why there are occasionally indications of reviewer tilt.

In this case, the reviewer not only has (strong) bias, it's clearly stated on the onset. The article's hosted on

that kind of site with stated agenda - whatever reviews written on it will be of that bias. At least in this case, people know where he's coming from. Similarly, if someone from the NRA reviews Splinter Cell and bases his review on the characterization of firearms says that on that criteria, it's poor (not that it is mind you), people shouldn't be cussing him either; that's the criteria he used, 'nuff 'said.

- **Wziorbovsky, Arch-Supremacy Member**

And the debate goes on... check out the rest of the thread at GameAxis PC Tavern forum.



## Star Power in Hell!!!

Who would have thought to see a popstar's mug in a game drenched in gory viscera and hellish creatures? Well, lest you say we are talking crap, here's some visible truth from our forums which is lately abuzz with DOOM talk. So here it is...

See that book...

Jay Fantasy sia

- **Quali343, Master Member**

Woah...really? Lol

- **streamage, Master Member**

PC Games section also showing this...

- **imjustlight, Senior Member**

Some siao kia (crazy kid) import the photo in?

- **greycat87, Senior Member**

No...heard that a game developer is a fan of Jay.

- **MetrixFanatic, Member**

Kudos to Jay, he really makes us Chinese proud.

- **bwaysalban, Senior Member**

lolz - Confirm boh? Got Jay sia?

- **Minerva, Senior Member**

Amazing!

- **alkhemarc, Arch-Supremacy Member**

First WarcraftIII then now Doom3!!

- **speedknight, Senior Member**

Eh, I thought the song he sang "ban shou ren" is somewhat related to WarcraftIII?

- **speedknight, Senior Member**

Is it? Don't really know but I dun like that song.

- **bwaysalban, Senior Member**

Well done Jay!

- **caslofx991s, Senior Member**

Forum content has been unedited to preserve authenticity.

ON THE FRONTLINES, THERE IS BUT ONE COMMANDMENT.

THOU SHALT KILL.



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## THE NEWS THAT NEVER WAS



### Hideo Kojima Admits Raiden Was A Horrible Mistake

"I don't know what got into me," Hideo Kojima of Metal Gear Solid fame admitted in a tearful interview regarding Metal Gear Solid 2, Sons of Liberty and the infamous inclusion of new main character Raiden. "I just thought the series needed a new face, with... with better hair!"

Recovering, he continued. "I wanted to create a new generation of hero. Someone the kids could relate to, who wasn't so macho, so capable. Someone less intelligent. Someone that whined more. A WHOLE LOT MORE. Someone that felt real to the gamers..."

Okay, maybe this didn't actually happen.

But it SHOULD have, dammit...

### Arnold "Terminator" Schwarzenegger To Ratify Games Ratings!

Ignoring the already unbelievable fact that the same man that killed a predator, chopped off James Earl Ray's head, and is in fact a cybernetic assassin from the future also has actual political power in the state of California, let us instead look at the fact that California is going to create a new system and policy for the rating of content in video games!

AB 1793, a bill that has already been passed in California will legally require all retailers of video games to make sure that a game's rating is clearly visible, and that an explanation of the rating is easily available to parents that are too clueless to figure out that "M" might just possibly mean "mature." There is only one thing that is stopping this bill from becoming a full fledged law.

Arnold Schwarzenegger.

As the governor of California, it is Arnie's responsibility to approve and sign a bill before it is formally recognized as a law. In theory, if he should decide NOT to sign

on the dotted line, this bill cannot pass and retailers will not be legally obliged to point out that a game has tons of nudity or sadistic violence.

Now, why on Earth the good governor would not sign the bill is beyond me. So what if he's had several games released in the past based on movies he's been in? So what if there's a game coming out right now based on the Terminator III film? So what if that game would surely get slapped with a mature rating and cut down on the income he would make if the game were freely available to all, without some nosy parent realizing their kid might be too young to play the game. He'd never do that, right?

Well, there's this statement from a California Assembly member Leland Yee, "I am hopeful the Governor will keep his promise to protect California's children and sign this legislation warning parents of video game content. More needs to be done to help parents make good choices about which games are appropriate for children."

### City of Heroes Goes Offline And Heads To Bookstores

Fans of NCsoft and Cryptic Studio's City of Heroes MMORPG will be interested to know that the gigantic backstory behind Paragon City, the First Hero, the Statesman, and the various WWII evil societies as well as alien invaders will start getting a much more in-depth explanation with the coming of the COH books.

That's right, BOOKS. The Web of Arachnos, slated for a late 2005 release is going to be just the first in a new series of novels chronicling the many guys and girls in fights that run around smashing things up in Paragon city when they're not taking the train to meet their latest foe.

Since its initial release, City of Heroes has already enjoyed a subscriber base of roughly 180,000 and is one of the most successful MMORPG releases of 2004 to date.



### Gaming Industry Admits Females Are Not A Myth

In a move that has stunned millions of male, adolescent-to-young-adult shut ins the world over, the gaming industry has admitted that not only are girls more real than unicorns, some of them actually play games and work within the industry.

The Game Initiative announced a Women's Game Conference to be held in September in Austin, Texas, that will cover women in gaming, as publishers, developers and players. Topics to be addressed include careers for women in gaming, gender inclusive game design (i.e., designing games with females in mind) and women and girls as gamers.

Keynote speakers at the conference will include women such as Kathy Schoback of Infinium Labs, and Patricia Vance, president of the Entertainment Software Ratings Board.

If you still doubt that these creatures exist, just go to the website and see the evidence for yourself at <http://www.womensgameconference.com/>

### Canadians Frightened of Prince Persia

Okay, ONE Canadian is frightened of Prince of Persia. So much so he wouldn't ride the bus with an ad for the game on it.

In Windsor Ontario the public buses have recently begun advertising the release of PS2/Xbox hit Prince of Persia for the Nintendo GameCube. The photo, taken directly from the cover of the game's packaging, features the Prince with a scimitar in hand. This was apparently too much for Tristan Clairmont, aged 4, who experienced genuine terror at the sight of the Prince, and had nightmares so profound that he refused to ride ANY bus with the Prince appearing on it.

After lodging seven complaints with the public transportation board of the city of Windsor, concerned mother Collette Clairmont scored a victory in getting the ads removed.

Another rider supported the move. "They should be more careful what they're advertising because transit caters to kids as well," said Transit Windsor bus rider Betty Riley.

So that let that be a lesson to all you kids out there, Prince of Persia is a scary game, and if you play too much of it, you just might end up flip kicking off walls and running your scimitar through some hapless innocent. Prince of Persia is BAD. But only because now we know Prince of Persia 2 is coming out...







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# Big City

## smallgadgets

For the lonesome city slicker, life is never dull, not with the entire repertoire of electronic gizmos that will help stave off the sense of being lost in the huge concrete jungle. Take a pick from our selections for this month and feel free to indulge. And if you still get that empty feeling, there's always DOOM III. By Clarissa Sia



### Samsung SyncMaster 710N

While this has just been added to a gamer's I-want-to-have-this wish list, Samsung's latest ultra-slim 17-inch LCD monitor offers razor-sharp picture and a wealth of innovative features for the corporate worker to the avid gamer. It has also recently clinched the Gold Award in the July 2004 issue of our sister publication, HardwareMAG.

So what warrant this 9/10 score?

- Magic features such as MagicBright which enables users to toggle between different brightness modes to suit different environments and
- Narrow bezel that measures just 0.6" thin, and a removable base, ideal for tilting
- Magic Speed display reduced response time of 12ms for stable viewing of DVDs and streaming video. Makes it ideal for excellent motion video images, multimedia-driven applications, gaming and animation.

A perfect fit if you want the latest LCD technology and versatility in a slim, stylish design in just one monitor.



### Wireless-G Game Adapter

Dream of enabling everything in your house to be a wireless hotspot?

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- network connectivity
- Works without drivers on PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube
- Also connects to Wireless-B (802.11b) networks at 11Mbps



### Samsung E600C

So why don't you know why there's another addition to the growing class of (and popularity for) clamshell phone – with all the bells and whistles? Here yours – lightest phone that has VGA camera, supports video recording, multi-shot capability similar to its predecessor E700B. Main screen (it means displaying 4- or 9-shot images on its screen), video sharing like Net.

Along with the ability to personalize every call with a photo on the other screen, photo-reminder. Just Called? Say I love you, photo, answering your calls might be your next best tool to avoid getting tripped in a bad date.

- Weight: 85g
- Type: Dual 65K colour TFT-LCD screens (internal/external)
- Video playing and recording
- 64-chord polyphonic ring tones
- VGA camera with effects, multi-shot, matrix-shot and 5X Digital Zoom



### BenQ JoyBee 102R

Attempting to blur the line between electronics and accessories, the Joybee 102R seems to have achieved just that. Drawing its inspiration from pocket-sized watches of the 19th century European nobles, up to 256MB of music can be packed in this miniaturized MP3 player. 10 hours playback of your favorite rhythms, bus-powered operation and battery recharging through USB connection to PC means an uninterrupted flow to your musical bliss.

Available in Indigo, Orange, Green and light enough to hang round your neck, just work on coordinating your outfit when you next go out hanging this gadget round your neck to do some justice to this delightful addition to your wardrobe.





## Nintendo DS

Nintendo DS (Developers' System) had created much suspense and rumors even before it was launched. Besides looking like a rather cool hand phone than a gaming device, its capabilities that includes a touch-screen input, voice recognition and wireless communication seems to be transforming the portable game industry by changing the way gamers relate to their games – and each other. With game developers creating a myriad of game titles for this next generation of handheld console, trust us, you would not mind being caught playing with this Nintendo baby in the bus.



## NEC Versa M540 Notebook

A beauty of curves and pleasing strips accentuating the oblong touch pad makes this NEC notebook stands out from the other black-bodies road warriors that executives lug around. Coupled with wireless capability enables access to network or Internet via wireless access spots and public hotspots. Its large screen and ATI Radeon graphics and multitar reader means you can take with you the combined power of the cinema, photo album and office everywhere you go. A powerful notebook for those always on the go, who said games can't be enjoyed on a notebook?



## Ennyah 256MB MP3 Player DS701

If you are ever in the need to record your lectures, yet be able to listen to your favorite tunes or when you are bored to tune to a FM Radio and have your media device turned into a 256MB flash drive, then take a closer look at the Ennyah 256MB MP3 Player DS701. Loaded with accessories such as earphones, USB attachment, USB Extension cable, and line-out cable makes this player a good bargain for those of us who just need everything in one device.

And if you want to have that "live" effect while listening to your songs between your ears, varied MP3 effect modes that range from Jazz to Pop to Rock will enable you to do just that! There's even a Karaoke Mode that display captions in phases, and coupled with good voice recording, who's to prevent us from singing aloud in the MRT or buses?

# SO LETHAL SOME THINK IT SHOULD BE BANNED



### TRUE STORY

At a recent competition a young gamer (his name) was destroying his opponents with rapid kills unobtainable quickness and outstanding precision. Was he really that good or was he using cheat codes? The authorities had to know. They interrogated him - then discovered his lethal Razer Viper and Razer aXcess mouse. Within seconds, the young gamer was tossed out, and the Razer peripherals outlawed from the competition. Seems Razer gave him "an unfair advantage."

Isn't that the point ?!

Everyone's looking for a better weapon, one that allows for faster and more accurate gameplay. But the Razer Viper and Razer aXcess combo is so superior to other mice and mats - using it is a crime. See for yourself. Just, don't get caught.

Don't take our word for it...check out what the reviewers say!

"This is the ultimate mouse for gamers..."  
-Tom's Hardware Guide

"The absolute best precision optical mouse..."  
-ExtremeMhz.com

"Game play with the Viper is flawless..."  
-atruereview.com

"It's a truly remarkable mouse in every aspect designed and built with the gamers in mind."  
-Hardwarezone.com



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This One



XSXE-AYL-2YFP

# Comin' at ya!

As the months count right down to the holiday seasons once again, the game developers are not exactly resting on their laurels, instead they are hard at work to bring to you some games that will take you all the way to Christmas and beyond and if it's any indication of sorts, the titles coming at the end of the end will be a blast.

By Jason Woo

## CRASH NITRO KART

GENRE: RACING DEVELOPER: NINE UNIVERSAL PUBLISHER: NINE UNIVERSAL



Kart racing is a nice way to feel stranded on N. Gayer's series. As a fan of the Nitro Kart, play as Crash T. Y. even a bit in Cortex as you, totally, and drive to speed and outgun your enemy drivers to oblivion. If you enjoyed the old time cartoon series about a bunch of Hanna-Barbura characters racing striped up dragsters, you will not doubt like it. It's not a new, but not cute femme fatales like Penelope P. Ship here, but we're misadventured that Crash would suffice. One gripe though, the screen of the Noka handheld may be a tad small for this kind of action but heck, pales in importance when you find yourself flying your goddamn best to overtake your nearest competitor in the game's arcade and time-trial modes that allows for the inclusion of up to four players through Bluetooth.

### Game Maths

Calculations they never taught in school.



Sonic's Raining racing



Overlord & Mummy from The Wacky Races



Crash Nitro Kart

## DEAD OR ALIVE ULTIMATE

GENRE: FIGHTING DEVELOPER: TEAM NINJA PUBLISHER: TECMO



Honestly, the volleyball spin-off was really just a tip of the iceberg if you are really into the ladies of the Dead or Alive series. In the upcoming Dead or Alive Ultimate, we'll be all set to be blown away with the game's online capability that will see you pitting your fists, knuckles, headbutts, creamy thighs and what have you (before all our minds start to wander) with all the other DOA fanatics worldwide.

And if that's not enough for all you hardcore junkies, there's also the huge amounts of replayability stored in the game with a whole slew of gameplay modes, leaderboards, and support for an audience of up to seven other players that will feed the desires of the more exhibitionist.



## TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW

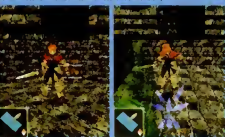
GENRE: ACTION DEVELOPER: RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT



Who you gonna call when the world is under the threat of global domination and terrorism? No, not the Ghostbusters but a group ironically named as Rainbow; a covert UN team made up of the best of the best in terms of man and weaponry. The year is 2007 and Venezuela, a chief exporter of oil to the United States is under threat from peace-hating despots with nefarious agendas (duh!). The job of the player is simple: to manipulate a team of six highly trained individuals in classified operations and espionage missions in order to foil the baddies who are against the Land of the Free. Old hat plot but oh well, this will do for now but wait, that's not all and the fun really sets in when you get to traverse some 14 action packed levels replete with 12 minutes of Hollywood style cinematic while firing from your arsenal of more than 30 weapons. This is mean business, we tell ya!

## XANADU NEXT

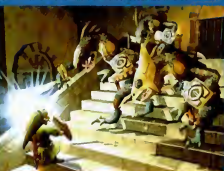
GENRE: ROLE-PLAYING DEVELOPER: FALCOM PUBLISHER: NIA



Whilst it has absolutely nothing to do with Olivia Newton John, much less anything disco. This is easily one of the better looking (and hopefully better playing) games to be coming onto the N-Gage platform following the yet to be released Requiem. In short, Xanadu Next is another RPG attempt on the handheld and is currently still in development in Japan under Falcom. Early releases of the game's trial version reveals a lone swordsman skulking in a fully 3D castle setting of which the gameplay reminds one of the early N64 Zelda games – which was quite a blast to experience. Look out for more on this game once we get our eager hands on a demo.

## THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

GENRE: ROLE-PLAYING DEVELOPER: NINTENDO PUBLISHER: NINTENDO



Continued for a 210th birthday and long and busy, recently been shown at the 2007 Los Angeles, the re-make of everybody's long-time favorite character from the annals of Nintendo history comes at a time when old franchises are all getting a fresh coat of paint from the developers.

Returning a battle system reminiscent of Ocarina of Time on the Nintendo 64, Link is able to perform a lot of the by now indispensable moves, such as the leaping lunge attack (for instance, The Traveler also showed scenes of graphical intensity that perhaps only the GameCube could do justice to, such as well-textured red stones and character skins in addition to a better and more fluid movement system – Link was shown riding a horse executing a mounted attack). In short, if Nintendo is behind the wheels of the game's development, you can be sure this newest Zelda episode will be one hell of a ride!

### Useless Zelda stuff you never knew you knew!



→ The Zelda story was created by Shigeru Miyamoto, Nintendo's legendary boss of the Mario Brothers.

→ Over the years, more than 10 Zelda games across a whole series of Nintendo platforms have been developed and released.

→ There was actually a 13-panel Zelda cartoon released. The Legend of Zelda shown during the good old Rio 1989 to be precise.

→ There's even a comic adaptation in 1990 to boot.

## THE SIMS 2

GENRE: SIMULATION DEVELOPER: MAXIS PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS



As we all near the September release date for The Sims 2, you can be sure that the good people over at Maxis are laboring their behinds off for what should be the biggest title release post-DOM III, in a nutshell, Sims 2 will once again see to the whole game plan of creating and managing your very own brood of sim people in a sim neighborhood and play God. Whilst the premise is simple enough, The Sims 2 comes with a whole hoopla of depth as your virtual living and breathing Sims will start to yearn for riches, fame, family, and more. Eventually your Sims will also grow old and pass on but you can continue to toy with their offspring and right those wrongs you did when you were handling the older generation, ain't it all good?

### Game Maths

Calculations they never taught in school.



The Simpsons



Neighbors: Betha want a Kyle and a Holly sim



The Sims 2

## TAK 2: THE STAFF OF DREAMS

GENRE: ACTION DEVELOPER: AVANLANCE SOFTWARE PUBLISHER: THQ



A sequel to THQ's Tak and the Power of Juju, players will get to witness Tak entering his next adventure with a plethora of new abilities, including his newfound juju powers. He'll also have new spirit animal powers that will give him unique attributes based on whether he chooses a piranha, jaguar, eagle, or dragon which is a boatload of coolness (reminds me of the Bravestarr of yore). Appearance-wise, Tak now sports a cleaner and leaner feel to his character model that we last saw in the previous Tak adventure. Probably the only thing that got carried along is the size of his trademark nose, which could probably put Hong Kong superstar Jackie Chan to shame. Look out for this little fellow when he swings our way come October.



## STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

GENRE: ACTION DEVELOPER: GIGAWATT GAMES PUBLISHER: LUCASFILM



Now, in our second preview of the game, we'll see LucasArts have selected upon themselves to once again refresh our memories in a, those of you, and you ain't gone is that have come and gone in all the previous and, essentially, Star Wars flicks by having gamers go back to the very beginning, as we're talking about the original Battlefront, which is the original war game from LucasArts and developer Pandemic.

The premise of the game is basically about clapping pieces of the battles set during both the original and sequel trilogies, and the best thing about it is that players will be able to play as either the Rebels or Imperials from the original trilogy or as the Republic's Clone Army or the Separatist forces side-by-side with the sequel trilogy.

### A (really) Short Star Wars Planet Guide

As a first look, here's a list of some planets a couple will appear in Episode III as well that will be featured in Battlefront.

- **Yavin IV** – the base of the present Rebellion and the old hideout of the Sith
- **Naboo** – the planet with Renaissance architecture and pretty corners with white faces
- **Endor** – the place where you find those dam Ewoks, but at least they are cuter than Jar Jar Binks
- **Geonosis** – the rocky planet with the insect-like Geonossians whom we first saw in Episode II alongside Count "Saruman" Dooku or Darth Tyranus for some of you
- **Kamino** – another Episode II locale with its signature water-based ecosystems and long-limbed inhabitants. Also where the first clone troopers were made
- **Hoth** – the ice planet where the world was first introduced to the Imperial Walkers and bipedal Tauntauns
- **Rhen Var** – Another snow-covered planet which may see itself on film come Episode III
- **Tatooine** – the one location that started it all. The birthplace of the Skywalker and the place where the scum of the galaxy gathers

## COUNTER-STRIKE: SOURCE

GENRE: FPS DEVELOPER: VALVE SOFTWARE PUBLISHER: VALVE/UNIVERSAL



The world of CS: Source is now even more visceral and realistic with on-source props like breakable items, interactive soundings complete with dust and other particle effects as well as some rag-doll physics (a perennial favorite) thrown in for good taste. Nothing much need to be said about the gameplay of CS except that its going to be a one-up from the rather flaccid Condition Zero released earlier. Available with Half-Life 2 later this year, FPS fans will once again stalk the earth with deeper and darker eye bags, that's for sure.



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BY SKARNE\_GAERU\_NISHRAL

RATING  
9.6

# DOOM 3



"SPRINTING IS CLOSELY TIED TO YOUR STAMINA, WHICH IS REPRESENTED BY A BROWN BAR AT THE BOTTOM LEFT CORNER OF THE SCREEN. IF YOU RUN TOO MUCH, YOU GET TIRED FAST AND YOU BECOME A PLODDING WEAPONS SALESMAN."

**WE** MONSTERS INCREASED THE ADULT + VIOLENCE. We finished "becoming" by taking the franchise and making it so explicit that we're not a penitential band of decompressed flatulence and exploding guts. We really understood the message of the franchise. We had sleepless nights just worrying the number of times some ass impulse would be an excuse from being blasphemous. We're not a band of god apart by our arsenal of infant Baby Coint-Richard's weaponry. We were in the middle of the world of Mister Marine, like the "Mister" of the world-saving ideals are controlled by the god-hood to deflate the egos of some of the most spineless, ugliest and meanest evil forces of the world, so we're our lifetimes.

Are we talking Bruce Campbell playing the role for an Evil Dead franchise return? No, the movie is better. We're talking DOOM III—the game, the world's best, waiting for nearly five years since it was first being announced and has finally shipped. Boy, did we forget the Chuckie Doll complex in all of us as much as it did our little adolescent naïve selves when we first played id Software's original DOOM in 1993.

HELL, SALES OF ADULT + DIAPERS JUST SKYROCKETED DOOM III is the latest incarnation of the famous DOOM franchise from the Mesquite, Texas-based developer whose very association with the first-person shooter genre is as synonymous as say, Kevin Spacey is to Keyser Soze or Michael Moore is to conspiratorial controversy. When the original DOOM emerged as a shareware game in 1993 from id Software—then a little known outfit led by programming philosopher John Carmack—it suggested the potential for games to become a major life-changing experience.

But what is it about DOOM and its big brother DOOM II that seem to have plagued DOOM III so much? Well, first of all, the storyline's just about the same throughout. In all three original DOOM titles, you play a Space Marine (working for the Union Aerospace Corporation, or UAC) to watch over their lovely Mars Research Facility who is suddenly stonewalled into blasting hell-hat-no-furious monsters and their big papas back down a recently excavated hell-hole with an arsenal of high-tech weaponry and a clueless swagger. The patterns are uncanny but then again, the eye-candy's different this time around.



If DOOM and DOOM II were like Bill Gates and Vinton Cerf sitting in a café and chatting up ways for technology to take over the world, DOOM III is basically Steve Jobs joining in with a "let's make it better-looking" agenda.

Thanks to the latest rewritten source engine by John Carmack and department, DOOM III is now a grand illusion of amorphous shadows and photon manipulation. Every screenshot taken in DOOM III is worthy of a wall painting, set beside Da Vinci's The Vitruvian Man and skewered with a blood-soaked pitchfork. In summary, DOOM III is no longer about an art-form. It is art by itself.

## THE BIRTH OF AFTERMATH: SHADOWING

When you first enter the world of DOOM III, you enter a world of fog and flicker. You have to lean closer towards your monitor, screen out to check out those dimpled, or more like glassily indentations on the walls. The sound-trapped textures on the walls, ceilings and floors are all very well researched and understood. As they start to disappear, you enter a world of intense light and shadow. Shadowing dance around the corners, and half-hanging light spurs out sparks and flicker systems. A heavy shadow casting ventilation fan cuts the darkness into equal measures of illumination, sending distorted messages of fear into your brain. The fog and the light-whooosh-whooosh echoing in your ears is a particularly quiet room. Light casts real-time shadows around objects and yourself. As you move in and out of shadows, you actually feel as if you're really there and that you really mean something to that game-world in a physical sense.



And even after evil has been unleashed, the once familiar industrial workmanship of the place is suddenly transformed into a world of splattered blood, chopped-up limbs and prophetic warnings scrawled in blood all over the mirrors and walls. As you traverse the levels from the facility's Alpha Labs to the Monorail, and then to Delta, your senses will be assailed with all kinds of visceral bloodletting that'll jump-start your ass from any semblance of seating comfort. These range from the bald-headed scientist corpse suddenly falling off the ceiling (while you can your flashlight around in absolute darkness) to the monster behind the closet scare technique—which is so full of life that every time it happens, shit just has to happen. You just can't get away from that.

There's also the occasional monster-jump-out-of-a-door scare technique that'll pop at least an aorta and the usual silhouette monster scare technique that you see outside your window or behind a flight of stairs, just to give you the creeps and a sub-conscious rearview mirror mentality.

## THE SOUND OF SILENCE (4-HA-H'S MUSIC BACKWARDS), IN 7.1 CHANNELS

If you take a lovely symphony, played by a lovely ensemble of flutists, violinists, bassists and pianists, and then play them backwards in slow, scratchy sequences, you'll get a sort of melancholic, rough-edged yet sadistic hint of what sort of sound effects you can expect from DOOM III.

Most of the time, you hear the steady but consistent techno beat of something approaching fast, something lurking just around the corner, or something trying to sniff you out from some box you're trying to camouflage as. Other times, you hear women moaning ("Help me...") just as you pick up some ammo from a corner, or babies squeaking from underneath some stairs, or a chaingun-toting undead commando stomping around with his Wolfenstein black boots and making sexually repressed grunts.

At other times, you hear the clamor of a loose grate falling to the floor, its echo sending shivers down your spine, or the hiss of a steaming pipe, shooting jets of air against your face just as you're starting to relax and



chill in a "safe zone." The environments in DOOM III are hell-bent on disturbing your peace at every second they've got, even if the monsters are asleep.

Try the game in a 7.1-channel speaker system environment and you'll have even better reason to crap in your pants. While we would encourage all to play the game in multi-channel speaker setups, we wouldn't recommend overdoing it in the dark or you'll scare yourself crazy (unless you're a daredevil).

The best sounds in the game are actually those you hear when you blast the crap out of those monsters, or specifically, the loading sequence "clicks" of your shotgun. This is because more often than not, that's the best sound you'll hear knowing that your gun's all pumped up for some serious face-off action and that "reloading" isn't going to be a major problem midway through a skirmish. Woe is the gamer whose weapon is half-depleted in ammo when the reloading kicks in while a menagerie of shit-faced imps and twisted spiders is wooling him. Woe is he indeed...



## PICTURES IN THE DARK, CAN I MEW THE LAWN TEE?

So how is the game played? First off, all weapons have no alternate firing mode. So this frees up your second mouse button, which you can use for a crouch or jump. If you have a scroll wheel on your mouse, you can use that to switch among weapons quickly.

You can't lean sideways like Mister Garrett from Thief, nor can you roll sideways like some superstar hotdog. You can however zoom a little bit (Z button), which isn't any useful to say the least since DOOM III isn't the chummiest game for sniper enthusiasts.

So here's the deal. You have your standard forward, backward, strafe left, strafe right, reload, jump, crouch and sprint buttons. Wait, did we say sprint? What



happened to auto-run? Well, unfortunately, there is no auto-run in DOOM III single-player (this feature is enabled in multi-player deathmatch). The most obvious reason for the lack of an auto-run feature in single-player is to keep you from breezing past those painstakingly rendered interiors without first appreciating the artwork. It's like visiting the Louvre for the first time and seeing only the Mona Lisa.

Anyway, most of us played the game with one finger permanently glued to the Sprint key. Some of us had our paper clips buttoned down on it against the keyboard.





The most compelling reason for persistent sprinting is basically to move fast when you're backpedaling towards an objective or you want to outrun a monster for a quick reprieve wallop once the distance is cleared.



Sprinting is closely tied to your stamina, which is represented by a brown bar at the bottom left corner of the screen. If you run too much, you get tired fast and you become a plodding weapons salesman. So run if you can but don't forget to enjoy the scenery.

#### THE MONSTERS AND THEIR POST-MEN@PAUSAL SYMPH@MS

While we applaud the A.I. of some of the monsters, we also feel that they are too clever at some point. For instance, there were moments when we opened a door only to be instantly assailed by machine gun fire from outside our peripheral vision. You have to ask yourself if they already know you're going to open the door like five seconds before you even do so.

Some monsters have pretty good dodging skills (you can see them strafing once in a while) and credit has to be given to id Software for trying to incorporate some level of characteristic A.I. in nearly all the monsters. However, most of the beasts are pretty dumb and predictable (even on Veteran mode) overall. Zombies, well, though dumb by nature since they were invented, could have at least moved with a little more pizzazz, or hobbling plod that could make your aim less on-the-mark.

#### CLUES AND HINTS: THEY DON'T MAKE YOU THINK TOO MUCH EITHER

Scattered around the Union Aerospace Corporation (UAC)'s premises are basically Personal Data Assistants (PDAs) which you use to upload information into your main PDA databank. These scattered PDAs are normally a collection of emails and audio logs recorded by the

once-lively owners, which is a way to give you a glimpse into the lives of the scientists and soldiers who had once populated the facility before the accident, or calamity.

Your PDA will show you your current objective, the weapons you have, new items you picked up (these are normally more of an instrumental component in continuing to the next level), and of course, audio logs and emails from picked-up PDAs around the base. Interesting emails of course can bring a smirk to your face—such as the recurring spam issue from a site called [www.martianbuddy.com](http://www.martianbuddy.com), the circulation of "PrOn" in the company's database, a super-sequel Quake game and Andrew Chin's obsession with a weird pen-and-paper role-playing game.

Other interactive elements in DOOM III include the health-dispensing machine, where there is a fixed amount of health (eg. 100 health points) and you click once for every 10 points of health you want healed. You can also find Med Kits scattered around the levels to heal yourself from an awful death.

**"THE GAME HAS SUPPORT FOR POTENTIAL MODDING (NEW MAPS, NEW SKINS, NEW DESIGNS AND GAME TYPES USING THE DOOM III ENGINE) SO IT WOULD BE NICE +0 WAIT+ AND SEE HOW THIS DEVELOPS IN THE FUTURE."**

#### DOOM III: WORTHY OF A SYSTEM UPGRADE?

Having completed the game, we felt that DOOM III has much to offer to both the hardcore and mainstream gamer. While it looks pretty on a fairly spec-up system, it is basically more of the same freights we saw in the earlier DOOM titles. You basically meet the same but better detailed bunch of monsters, use the same set of dodging and firing techniques on different bestiary and almost always crouch under tables and vents with your flashlight hoping to see a BFG tucked away at every hidden corner.

While DOOM II liberated us with the wanton use of our weapons, especially the BFG and rocket launchers, DOOM III keeps us caged in dark corners as we plan our next move or next ammo to spend. When we got



our BFG, we only had very limited opportunities to use it in wide, open spaces except perhaps towards the end part of the game or into a roomful of nasty monsters.

Is DOOM III worthy of a system upgrade then? Yes. It is a game with a beautiful engine that no other title has yet surpassed. To simply not play this game is like not watching Neil Armstrong land on the moon live on TV in 1969. It may not jumpstart the same amount of awe and wonder in terms of storyline or character development as Half-Life did, nor will it spruce up a multiplayer community as quickly as Quake did (multiplayer on DOOM III is limited to only 4 players per session and there are no more than five deathmatch maps at the most—but there is a way to increase the player quota now however), DOOM III is superior than its predecessors in terms of graphics and is definitely at the forefront of redefining the art of blending horror with science. These two factors themselves will jumpstart a new community of horror-related first-person shooter titles, as the use of shadows and light can now be manipulated to create completely new scenarios and details.

We like the different scenarios posed by each of the monster bosses we met in the game and we didn't get bored killing the same old monster we first saw like ten levels back. This is because each encounter is different in some way—maybe the lighting's different, maybe the gun we're using has a different effect, maybe the accompanying monster support team we're encountering is larger and tougher, or maybe it's just plain scary no matter how many times we've experienced it.

When your heartbeat starts racing and you flinch while a monster jumps you, you'll know you're already sold into the world of DOOM III.





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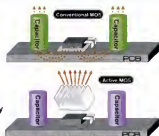
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# THE ULTIMATE DOOM III MACHINE FROM...HEEEELL!!!

id Software's DOOM 3 is poised to be one of the most played titles in the history of 3D gaming. Anticipation has grown to monumental levels as hundreds of thousands of people worldwide wait to experience or HAVE already experience the phenomenon called DOOM 3. Along with the anticipation, many are experiencing apprehension over the level of gameplay they can expect from their current hardware. Still others, using this occasion to mull over an upgrade, have been waiting to discover which of their many hardware choices will provide them with the best DOOM 3 experience.

So in this issue, GameAxis have compiled a special Doom III Hardware Guide to help answer your hardware questions. We also want to help maximize the overall DOOM 3 experience for those of you that have been waiting for the opportunity to upgrade. By Battousai!

## GRAPHICS CARD - NVIDIA GEFORCE FX 6800

Doom III is one of those games made to kill off your old graphics card. In order to play Doom III at the best detailed level, you're going to need one of those NVIDIA GeForce FX 6800 babies. The Albatron 6800GT is one such card that's based on the GeForce FX 6800 chipset, but it goes one step further. Normal GeForce FX 6800 has a memory clock rated at 700MHz, whereas the 6800GT is rated at 1GHz. So you can be assured that your Doom III won't stutter or lag during one of those multiplayer fragfest. The Albatron 6800GT also includes 128MB of DDR 3 memory, to allow gamers to bump the game up to higher resolutions.

→ [www.albatron.com.tw](http://www.albatron.com.tw)

## Key Albatron 6800GT Specifications

- NVIDIA® GeForce™ 6800GT GPU
- Superscalar 16-pipe GPU Architecture
- 128 MB, 256-bit DDR3 Memory
- AGP 8X with D-Sub/TV-Out/ DVI ports
- CineFX™ 3.0 engine supports Microsoft® DirectX® 9.0 Shader Model 3.0
- IntelInsight™ 3.0, UltraShadow™ II, HPDR, Digital Vibration Control™ 3.0 multi-display technologies
- Bundled DVD Player software and 8 PC games\*



## MONITOR - BENQ LCD MONITOR FP783

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## Key BenQ LCD Monitor FP783 Specifications

- 17-inch LCD
- 1280x1024 Resolution (Max)
- 300cd/m<sup>2</sup> Brightness (Max)
- 600:1 Contrast (Max)
- 12ms Response Time
- DVI, S-Video, Input Connector

→ [www.benq.com.sg](http://www.benq.com.sg)

## CPU - INTEL PENTIUM 4 WITH HYPER-THREADING TECHNOLOGY EXTREME EDITION 3.4GHZ

You also need to take your CPU speed into account when selecting your graphics card. If your CPU isn't fast enough to maintain high frame rates, then that expensive NVIDIA GeForce 6800GT may not perform much better than an ATI Radeon 9600 XT. And our processor of choice goes to the uber screaming fast Intel Pentium 4 Extreme Edition 3.4GHz.

Some of the features inside this processor such as the 2MB L3 cache can be ignored. Especially by your games. The vertex buffers for many games can reside completely in it. Consequently, you get enhanced graphics for more realistic game play through faster frame rates, better detail rendering, and higher resolutions. The 2MB of cache is also great for video. A full frame of video at D1 resolution requires more than 1MB of cache. The 2MB cache handles the frame all in one shot compared with the 512k on most desktop processors. The Intel Pentium 4 with HT Technology Extreme Edition 3.4GHz is without a doubt the best money can buy at the moment.

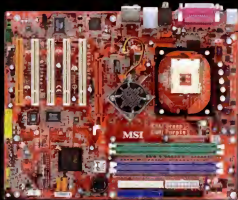
→ [www.intel.com](http://www.intel.com)



#### MAINBOARD - MSI 875P NEO-FISR

So how do you get the most intense system possible? As you know, having the most powerful computer isn't just about processor speed. It's about the entire platform. You need a platform that capitalizes on all the potential of every component. For the most demanding Doom III gamer, that's coupling the Intel Pentium 4 Processor with HT Technology Extreme Edition 3.4GHz with the MSI 875P Neo-FISR motherboard. What we really like about this MSI board is that it comes complete with a wide array of features including onboard SATA RAID and 7.1 Channel Audio (Note: the last bit is a cost-saver because Doom III won't sound any different even on a high-end dedicated soundcard anyway).

➔ [www.msi.com.tw](http://www.msi.com.tw)



#### MEMORY - CORSAIR TWINX1024-4000PRO

Doom III on its best settings will require a pretty hefty amount of memory too. The TwinX1024-4000PRO is a 1GB matched memory pair specially designed for motherboards using chipsets with dual memory channels, such as the MSI 875P Neo-FISR. TwinX memory kits are designed to provide the ultimate in performance and stability in gaming. As part of Corsair's XMS Pro Series, each module includes the high-efficiency aluminum XMS heatsink, and 18 activity LED's that show the level of memory activity on each bank.

Designed to meet the extreme demands of a serious hardcore gamer, Corsair's XMS2 Pro Series DDR2 module offer the same trusted performance XMS modules are known for. If you're on the lookout for new memory for your gaming needs, this Corsair baby is one to consider.

➔ [www.corsairmicro.com](http://www.corsairmicro.com)



#### SPEAKERS - CREATIVE INSPIRE T7700 7.1 CHANNEL SPEAKERS

Doom III is really best played on a 7.1 Channel Audio speakers. Turn off the light, crank up the volume of the game on the T7700, and we guarantee you'll never be able to sleep alone at night ever again. The thing about the T7700 is that with its superior positional audio from 7 satellite speakers, you'll experience the most dramatic surround sound available for EAX or Microsoft DirectSound 3D games, movies and music—not just Doom III.

And, for total control of this awesome speaker system, the included Audio Control Pod integrates the unique M-PORT for exclusive connectivity to compatible Creative audio players, and features a line-in, headphone jack, power on/off, and volume/bass controls. Not bad at all!

➔ [www.creative.com](http://www.creative.com)



#### OTHER IMPORTANT DOOM III COMPONENTS TO CONSIDER -



#### Harddisk - Western Digital SATA 250GB WD Caviar SE

A capacity of 250GB, 8MB cache, and a data transfer rate of 150MB/sec. We love this thing.

➔ [www.wdc.com](http://www.wdc.com)



#### Razer eXactMat

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➔ [www.razerzone.com](http://www.razerzone.com)



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#### Belkin Nostromo SpeedPad n52

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➔ [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com)



#### APC BE500AS UPS

(Uninterruptible Power Supply)

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➔ [www.apc.com](http://www.apc.com)



#### Coca Cola

A can of colas goes a long way when playing Doom III, for hours of fun on the go.



#### Razer Viper Mouse

To kill that Cyber Demon, you need a weapon. And that weapon is a Razer Viper mouse—arguably Earth's best gaming mouse.

➔ [www.razerzone.com](http://www.razerzone.com)



#### Kit Kat

Have a break, have a Kit Kat. Remember, take regular breaks when playing any games for prolonged periods.





## Interview with Massive Entertainment

GameAxis had the chance to link up with Martin Wallisz, CEO of Massive Entertainment, talking about the hardware and technology of today and how it influenced the development of Ground Control II.

**Games have evolved greatly in the past. How has today's hardware and technology made games more enjoyable?**

New graphics technology obviously makes the games look much nicer. For example the great rippling/reflecting water effect in Ground Control II is only possible on new hardware. Also, keep in mind that today's hardware does not only improve the graphical quality, but also the amount of units and game play detail that can be added into a game. A few years ago it would have been impossible to develop a game with hundreds of on-screen units, making it a very different game play experience. As technology continues to improve, developers will always make use of the added possibilities to increase both game play and audiovisual quality.

**What advantage/s can the new PCI Express technology bring to a gamer?**

PCI Express improves the data transfer speed between the graphics processor (GPU) and the other components of the computer. At its core, this allows for a lot more texture detail and more geometry (e.g. polygons per unit). If all gamers had PCI Express graphics cards/mother boards we could have added even more visual detail to the terrain and units in Ground Control II. Unfortunately (from a developer perspective) we obviously want to make all our games and engines scalable so that they can run on both low-end and high-end computers. As always, having the latest hardware creates a visually improved and smoother experience.

**Graphics and Game play have long been considered the most important aspects of games. What about audio?**

Better audio heavily increases the immersive factor, but unfortunately both developers and gamers alike all too often neglect it. With Ground Control II we worked hard on our sound system to ensure that all guns, explosions and other war cries are conveyed with earth-shattering audio. Listening to an artillery shell fly close by the camera is a truly gratifying experience.

**What kind of performance and optimization can a gamer get when running games like Ground Control II on an Intel-based PC?**

The entire development team for Ground Control II worked on Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor based systems so it has been thoroughly tested to work properly on most both old and new Intel configurations.

- Jason Woo, GameAxis



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# Ground Control 2

PLATFORM: PC  
GENRE: STRATEGY  
DEVELOPER: MASSIVE ENTERTAINMENT  
PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL

BY NEIL ONG

RATING  
8.5/10

## Introduction

Taking place about 300 years after the original Ground Control title, the story now shifts its focus to the colonies located in the Outer Sphere of the Milky Way galaxy, which are under siege by the powerful Draconis Empire in a bid to return them to the Emperor's stranglehold. Nearly all the outer sphere worlds have been reclaimed, lest a few, one of which includes Morning Star Prime, which is where you come into the picture...

## Gameplay and such...

The basic structure of Ground Control remains the same. Players are given a set number of troops that are dropped via a dropship from a base. These units will have to be used with care to ensure success, but unlike the original, players won't be stuck only with the forces they started with, which somewhat slowed down the game quite a bit.

One major difference with this installment is how the Dropships now play a much more important role than in just bringing troops into the battleground. They can be upgraded now in various ways that adds a whole lot more freedom in designing your own strategy. Feel like you need a little more oomph in terms of firepower? Then upgrade its weapons. Or a little more space at the back? Then increase its storage capacity. It's entirely up to you.

## Graphics and Sound

Audio-wise, GC2 is a pretty neat sounding game all round. The music manages to build and sustain the atmosphere and whilst not exactly Grammy award-winning, it does hold its own against the other RTS titles. Battles sound great, with the sound of bullets flying and vehicles exploding all startlingly crisp and satisfying. Kudos as well to the voice-overs or voice-acting which were all well done.

The graphics engine of GC2 is probably one of the best things in the game. Simply put, GC2 is one of the best-looking RTS titles I've seen in a long long while. Each of the units are wonderfully modeled

and detailed, and their individual mannerisms are pretty darn nifty. The camera views (namely top-down and fully pan-able) offered in GC2 allow you to view the entire battle field from almost every possible angle (even close-up!), revealing some of the most beautifully rendered maps and scenery ever seen in an RTS game.

## Single Player and Multiplayer modes...

The single player mode offers two campaigns, namely the Terran (human) campaign and that of the Viron. There's nothing really exceptional about the campaigns, just good clean fun with great gameplay coupled with a wonderful graphics engine, although I would highly recommend completing the human one before moving on to the Viron one to keep the story spoiler-free.

The Multiplayer mode is a deathmatch style affair that enables players to join a game at anytime they want, as compared to previous RTS titles where players would actually have to wait for a whole new game to start. This flexibility allows players a much greater deal of action in a much shorter amount of time, and in addition to this the developers have also created MASSGATE, a matchmaking service for players to find others to do battle with.

## Conclusion

GC2 is one smashing good game. Great game play, amazing graphics and great sound make for a thoroughly enjoyable experience. The immense amount of action was a great refresher when compared to RTS titles where strategy and patience is all-encompassing. And it was great fun not having to amass resources as in other RTS games to build a large attack force. GC2 emphasizes a great deal on efficiency, both in the type of units created and the deployment of these units, the balancing of which was in itself a strategy. All in all, GC2 is one game that deserves the thumbs-up.



Intel takes gaming to the

# Extreme



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So what does Hyper-Threading Technology do? Essentially, Hyper-Threading compatible processors enable simultaneous running of programs more efficiently, and accomplish more tasks in less time. With Hyper-Threading, you can now burn a CD, send a friend an MSN/ICQ message, and while engaging in your favorite online game – all at the same time!

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- Puck, *The Midsummer Night's Dream*

Indeed if the fairy Puck would have to witness the speeds of the latest chipsets from Intel, the arrow speeding from the Tartar's bow will be but a snail crawl instead. In short, Platforms based on Intel® 915G Express Chipsets and Intel® 915P Express Chipsets are offering catered to the mainstream consumer whereas the 925X variant, viz Intel® 925X Express Chipsets is designed specifically for high-end gaming or specialized uses.

Both chipsets are designed to support Hyper-Threading Technology, and are Intel's first PC chipsets to feature DDR2 memory that provides more responsive memory performance for all kinds of gaming usage. Besides being a fit-all for the PC platform, Intel® 925X and Intel® 915 Express Chipsets also feature integrated wireless access points that essentially makes wireless home networks a reality for PC users without a wireless networking card. So that's a one-up for lovers of LAN gaming, Counter-Strike: Condition Zero or Unreal Tournament 2004 at home anyone?

Audio lovers will be very heartened with the chipsets as well. Intel® 925X and 915 Express Chipsets come with the Intel High Definition Audio, which not only support several audio formats but also enables users to experience a more encompassing home theater experience on their personal computers with any 7.1 Speaker Systems. Imagine hearing the growls and grunts of the demons surrounding you in DOOM III or the quiet mumblings of the guards in Thief III: Deadly Shadows in full unadulterated 7.1 stereo qualities. Woot!

Simultaneous audio streams will also enable computer users to play while chatting on their ICQ or MSN Messenger at the same time, or to pipe multiple audio streams throughout the home.



Essentially it means that while you are busy with the leveling treadmill in Final Fantasy XI or Lineage II, you can send instant messages to your friends and engage in idle chitchat, which will not cause your computer to stall. Talk about multi-tasking!

The Intel® 915 Express Chipsets chipset also comes along with a 915G variant, where "G" refers to the Integrated Graphics Chipset on the Intel Desktop Motherboards. With a 915G-based main board, gamers get the in-built GMA (Graphics Media Accelerator) 900 that provides incredible visual quality, versatile display options and 3D performance for consumers — all without the additional costs that discrete graphics cards can require.

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# Warhammer 40,000: DAWN OF WAR

By Chris Degnan  
Designer, Relic Entertainment  
**Designer Diary Part 2**



Hey there! I'm Chris Degnan, one of the designers on Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War, and today I get to present to you a designer diary! As part of the Dawn of War design team, I work closely with Jay (the lead) and the other designers, and I get to poke my nose into a lot of cool stuff! For me, one of the most exciting aspects of the game development process has always been the creative process that goes into developing the game and all of its many bits and details. And that's what I'll be delving into in this diary.

The creative process starts with the identification of the core ideas or goals of the game. In this case, we had this great license in Warhammer 40,000, which is filled to the brim with tough warriors with big guns and bloodthirsty enemies, in addition to some really strong concepts for where we wanted to go with our real-time strategy (RTS) game. So we took these concepts—and the license—and outlined what would define our core gameplay. We wanted to depict brutal, frontline combat in a manner never before seen in a real-time strategy game. We also wanted to make a game that appealed to the casual gamer without losing touch with the more avid RTS or Warhammer 40,000 fan. We wanted to capture the feel and the energy of the Warhammer 40,000 universe, and we wanted to create a fun and compelling resource system.

Our prototype consisted of only one of our four races, the space marines, and only a fraction of their final inventory of units and buildings. But with that handful of units, we were able to implement and test all our basic gameplay features. With our space marine unit, we were able to test the playability of squad-based unit control, reinforcing squads in the field, upgrading weapons (only a missile launcher in those days), and executing model infantry combat (that's when they use their guns at range and pull their combat knives out at close range).

We had our builder to make our buildings, we had our basic vehicles to test our vehicle-versus-infantry balance, and we had our new resource system of "strategic points" to test the feasibility of an economy based around a military.

All in all, the POC went amazingly well. Armed with a working example of where we wanted our game to go, we hired some more talent and set about the construction of the game properly. Now in a prototype, a lot of what we do is done for expediency, and a lot of the prototype assets must be set aside and replaced by the real thing, developed from scratch. By doing this, we ensure that all of the art assets and gameplay features are done right, without the potential limitations of rough prototype solutions.

All of that hard work and planning in the early stages of development has led to something that we really feel delivers on our core vision. Thanks to all the effort put in by the artists and programmers, you can watch as ranks of armed combatants take aim and blow one another apart before charging in with swords and axes drawn to beat one another in close combat, complete with stunning special attacks and vicious killing blows. Warhammer 40,000 fans and newcomers alike can feel the earth shake as buildings drop from the sky, warriors in power armor clash with horrible aliens, and monsters summoned from the warp stride into battle and stomp their foes to pieces.

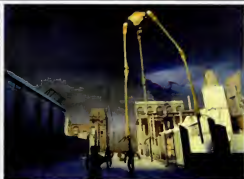
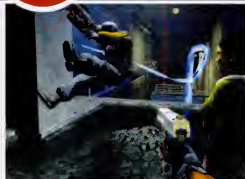
As players take to the field in Dawn of War, the initial calm belies the carnage that waits just a few moments into the game. As the builders start frantically calling in and assembling buildings, squads of basic infantry push out to both capture points and secure resources. Soon the commander takes to the field and leads the first charge against the enemy. Looking for any advantage, the players use superior numbers, cover bonuses, or weapon upgrades to draw first blood. Then it becomes a mad dash to secure more points and maintain existing forces while adding new units to counter the opponent's army. Soon, the first vehicles rumble on to the killing fields, perhaps catching an unprepared foe completely by surprise and decimating infantry ill-equipped to deal with the new threat. But soon counters are called in, and the battle again evens out. Before long, victory becomes a matter of who can protect their economy and maintain their military might while denying their opponent these same luxuries. And when death comes, it's usually in the form of a landslide of monstrous killing machines and hordes upon hordes of gun-wielding warriors.



**SPECIAL  
PREVIEW**

# HALF-LIFE 2

BY AMOR VIE  
 • PLATFORM: PC  
 • GENRE: SHOOTER  
 • DEVELOPER: VALVE SOFTWARE  
 • PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL  
 • RELEASED DATE: 30th SEPTEMBER (Oceania)



## The 2nd Coming is at hand...

Everybody was anxious to know what the second coming of the "God" of action games would be like. Understandably, expectations were sky high, but what Valve Software demonstrated during an exclusive session with GameAxis literally blew us away. The original Half-Life redefined the First Person Shooter genre, but Half-Life 2 is going one step further – it's going to rewrite the textbook on how games should really be made.

## Everything's bigger and more furious!

Gabe, Valve's head honcho, claims that the Source engine is capable of doing four things far better than anything available, which is, rendering realistic human models, high quality graphics comparable to those available in movie studios, significantly better AI and last but not least physics and interactivity as close as it gets to the real world. Just as in reality, all objects in Half-Life 2 are made of materials with each material having its own physical properties. Like for instance, objects made of wood, look like a wood, break like a wood, float like a wood, to be precise behave like wood when you interact with it. And there is no limitation on the complexity of interaction, i.e. if several objects are thrown in water, the ones that have density more than water, sink and those with a lesser density float and all the objects behave the way they do in the real world. The level of detail is simply amazing.

A good reference to the physics and interactivity aspects of the game was made in the "Coastline" demo that I played, where I had accidentally wandered my buggy too close to the sea and got the vehicle stuck. In normal circumstances, you as the player would simply dump the buggy where it is. Not in Half-Life 2.

Doug, on my right, could only muster a grin and hinted that I should just whip out Freeman's "Manipulator" gun (a gravitational weapon of sort) and consider my options really hard. So I did just that. With the Manipulator, Freeman (me, in this case) could push the buggy to dry land and drive again!

The enemies are also a hell lot smarter this time around. In the later part of the same map, I came across an alien race called the "Combine" soldiers. Remember the badass Marines, who'll roll, duck and dive away, from the first game? Think of the Combine as even more badass versions of them. They'll not only adopt the above-mentioned behavior, but will also exhibit intelligent tactics according to the situation. Hide yourself in a room, block the entrance, and they'll attempt to flush you out by lobbing grenades through an opening such as a window.

Engage them in an open area and they'll spread out to flank you on both sides. Such A.I. and environment versatility and interactivity does give a lot of added value to the game – try using a different tactics on your second game perhaps? With such a powerful engine, also think of what you, if you're a modder, can do with the game's included map builder.

Valve cannot emphasize enough that these events aren't scripted. This is all coded into the A.I. Computer controlled characters get an idea about what to do, and then they do it. That's pretty sweet if you ask me. Also extremely complex. Most of all, entertaining to watch – and play. So when will the game be out? Our spies last reported that a promising date would be the end of this month. So quickly complete your Doom III, because Half-Life 2 is really just around the corner.



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**RATING**  
**9.0**

## Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay

BY CAI BAHU  
 PLATFORM: XBOX  
 GENRE: ACTION  
 DEVELOPER: STARBUZZE  
 PUBLISHER: VENTURE PIONEER  
 DISTRIBUTOR: DIGITAL SINGAPORE



### Bang Bang Boom

Even from the menus, you can tell that the game is going to be great visually. I used to play with this toy that was really a bed of moveable pins and by putting an object against it, the bed will be impressed with a 3D image of it. The menus here are similar to that. There are no dull menus with an option that light up upon selection here and in their place is this gant cube that rotates and has options animate upon selection. They certainly compliment the game that is to follow very well indeed.

Riddick starts by speaking to one of the guards and you're greeted with the first choice you have to make – one of two replies to the guard. Doesn't this remind you of an adventure game? One thing that's worthy of note here is that the script in the game is smart and the characters don't shy away from spouting vulgarities. The F-word, for one, is uttered quite a bit. Though parents may frown on this, this all adds to

the realism factor since, after all, you don't expect prison inmates to mince their words do you?

### Why Are Action Heroes Always Bald?

You don't have to worry about crappy AI in the game because enemies are competent and will dodge to the best of their abilities. They would struggle when you grab them and would run for cover when it's obvious they'd lose in an all-out assault.

### To Buy or Not To Buy

I wouldn't be surprised if a few years down the road, this game's still being mentioned as one of the must-buy, must-play Shooter for the Xbox. It's a good solid game and it's based on a movie franchise that looks set on becoming increasingly popular. Remember the Die Hard line of games that came out when the movie starring Bruce Willis became a success? The Chronicles of Riddick might just make a nice series of games along that same line.



## Silent Hill 4: The Room

PLATFORM: PS2, XBOX  
 GENRE: HORROR ADVENTURE  
 DEVELOPER: KONAMI  
 PUBLISHER: KONAMI

**RATING**  
**8.5**

### Trapped!

In a departure from the previous games, the majority of Silent Hill 4 takes place in locations outside of Silent Hill itself. In this sequel, you play the wholesome looking Henry Townsend, who moved into Room 302, South Ashfield Heights in the town of Ashfield two years ago. All is well until Henry gets locked inside his apartment for five days. It sounds like a bad case of absent-mindedness and missing house keys at first, but who put the mess of chains and locks on the inside of the front door. Why can't the windows open? Who's Walter and why did he write "Don't go out" in red on the door? Is that blood or is it just red ink? Are the recurring nightmares that have been plaguing Henry for the last five days just a coincidence?

### Look at Terror in the eyes

The first-person view is not the only tweak that Konami has added to the series. In previous games,

players had to gauge their health with a screenshot in the player status screen that would be tinted with hues of green (good health) to red (bad health). Silent Hill 4 does away with that and sticks with a standard health bar. Another departure from Silent Hill tradition is the lack of a static-emitting radio to warn you of nearby monsters.

Aside from the usual combat and puzzles, "charged hits" have been added to the combat in Silent Hill 4, which allow you to charge your attack by holding down on the attack button. When fully charged, your in-game character will make a much stronger attack than usual. Some weapons charge up faster than others but may be less powerful or slower to use, while others deal more damage but have a longer charge-up time. This added depth is really welcome; just make sure you choose your weapons wisely. All in all, if you're a fan of the Silent Hill series, The Room is a must get.

### Claustrophobics best keep away.

Incidentally, the theme of Silent Hill 4 is not all that original. Over the years, games about being confined in tiny spaces have come and gone but one still stay on in our minds because its execution is so darn simple, it hurts.

**Crimson Room** - <http://www.fasc-csc.com/index.php>

Wake up drunk and in a stupor, you are a nameless individual who finds himself trapped in a red room. Scattered throughout the room are essential tools for your escape but don't go expecting an easy ride, there are enough

twists and turns that can make your head spin – and it's only a simple Flash game at that. Created by Toshimitsu Takano, it has since become quite a cult classic and you can even look up the list of escapes – if you can successfully escape the four walls.

If you cannot get out, we are kind enough here to provide you a hand, here's the guide for Crimson Room (you know a game's famous when it even has its own walkthrough).

Just here it is, the answers:

<http://www.nordinfo.com/article.php?0040315225410380>



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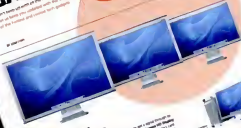
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## Shadow Ops: Red Mercury

BY SHOELLESS WAYNE SANTOS  
 PLATFORM: XBOX  
 GAME TYPE: FPS  
 DEVELOPER: ZOMBIE  
 PUBLISHER: AT&T  
 DISTRIBUTION: AT&T SINGAPORE

RATING  
**6.5** /10

### Mixed Up Visuals

This is another one of those games where the visuals come in a mixed bag.

Some of the environments, especially the urban ones, like the opening rounds in the Middle East, look pretty darn authentic. The textures are pretty rich and detailed, and they do kind of look like the kind of war torn

footage you might have seen in the news during the Gulf Wars.

The characters on the other hand, lack the same amount of detail and tend to come as rather flat and not quite up to par with some of the environments they are placed in.

### More 5.1-7.1 Audio Joy

This is one area where Shadow Ops truly shines.

Gunfire from friends and enemies can be targeted from sound alone. Explosions rock through the

environment from every direction. Hell! You can even hear when a grenade is rolling on the ground, with a quite a bit of chatter from both your squad mates (which gets a little repetitive at times) and your enemies, screaming and dying in their various native languages.

The French accents once you hit Paris are a little annoying and OTT, but since the French themselves are also annoying and OTT, I can chalk that up to good realism on the part of the voice actors.

### The Final Word

Make no mistake there are moments of gaming fun, and you can actually enjoy the game to some degree. But if they'd spent less time on making a virtual Black Hawk Down experience and more time on the core game itself, this one could have been far more memorable. But hey, it's THX Certified, and not many games can make that claim.



### URBAN LEGEND 101

Played the game but do you know that Red Mercury is actually polar military urban legend? Although it cannot be proven or not sense, it's interesting nonetheless to know a little about the what Red Mercury is supposed to be.

According to belief, Red Mercury is the codename for very high-quality uranium or plutonium used to make highly portable fusion bombs or H-Bombs. However, with the inclusion of Red Mercury, fusion bombs will no longer need to go through a nuclear fission (breaking up of atoms) in order to detonate thus making the size of the bomb noticeably smaller and infinitely more powerful as seen in the game. Scary huh? Glad it's only a legend.



## Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy

BY SHOELLESS WAYNE SANTOS  
 PLATFORM: XBOX  
 GAME TYPE: ACTION  
 DEVELOPER: BUNN SOFTWARE  
 PUBLISHER: LUCAS ARTS

RATING  
**8.0** /10

### Much To Learn You Have, My Young Padawan...

The sequel to Jedi Outcast, Jedi Academy is a part of the PC original that follows the world of Star Wars in the aftermath of Return of the Jedi; the empire is gone, its remnants still fight to regain control, a New Republic is rising from the ashes and Luke Skywalker, now a Jedi master, is forging an academy from which a new generation of Jedi Knights are arising.

### Have Lightsaber, Will Travel

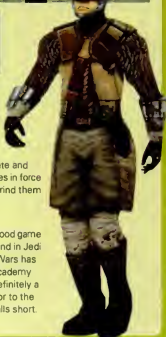
Jedi Academy is a pretty strong title in the gameplay department. One nice touch that is different from Jedi Outcast is that since you are the genius Padawan that was able to construct your own lightsaber without training, you get to use one right from the get go. In addition, you get a full set of basic force abilities that all Jedi have (such as jump, or push/pull) and a secondary set of skills that are

divided into light side and dark side skills.

The basic skills will automatically level as you progress through the game, while the secondary skills will rise at your own discretion. Should you prefer using the Jedi mind trick, you can focus on that, whereas if you prefer giving into your hate and anger, you can down a room full of baddies in force lightning, or simply use force choke to grind them into submission.

### The Final Word

For my money, while Jedi Academy is a good game that improves on a lot of the aspects found in Jedi Outcast, the big draw for me with Star Wars has always been the story, and here, Jedi Academy falls a little short. As a pure game, it's definitely a contender on its own. But as a successor to the story of Kyle Katarn in Jedi Outcast, it falls short.







## Pro Race Driver

BY SHOCKLESS WAYNE SANTOS

PLATFORM: XBOX  
GENRE: RACING  
DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS  
PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS  
DISTRIBUTOR: KENZO SINGAPORE

RATING  
**8.5** 10

### Drive, Boy, DRIVE!

Pro Race Driver is a difficult game to review because while there is much to love, there is also a great deal of lost potential. And what is already a great game, could have been one of the legendary ones that people always remember. Alas, Codemasters dropped the ball somewhat, and we have near perfection as opposed to the total perfection the game could have been.

### Your Gorgeous Car Won't Be By The Race's End...

You HAVE to love the graphics of this game. Sharp, realistic, with cars that have a very respectable number of polygons. Even the ads you whip past are reflected in the rear window of your car. But where your jaw will begin to drop is when the damage model kicks in. It seems like every part of a car can—and eventually will be—dented and damaged to the point where it just falls right off. Finishing a race while grinding axle because your wheels are gone is a sight to behold.

Sound is both amazing and horrible. The voice acting is fantastic stuff, and really carries the story along. The directional audio during races is so realistic you'll find yourself wincing when you crash into something. Where the game stumbles—and VERY badly—is in the fact that what little licensed music there is appears only in cinemas and on the radio in certain buildings between races. The game itself is completely devoid of any music during races. BOOO!

### So This Is a "Car-PG"

These major omissions aside, however, the rest of the game is solid. The physics engine, both for the cars and the damage they take is a sight to behold. The controls operate flawlessly and gamers will come to realize that the only way to lose this game is through your own error. You must understand your machine and its limitations and strengths. When you do, the entire game opens up to you and you'll find a very engaging game with superb graphics, controls and gameplay, that is one of the best racers currently out on the market for the Xbox. It is the lack of music, RPG Elements, and most glaring of all, no Online Capability that make gamers wonder what the game could TRULY be



## The Sims Bustin' Out

BY CAR JAVIER

PLATFORM: XBOX  
GENRE: SIMULATION  
DEVELOPER: MAGES  
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS  
DISTRIBUTOR: ELECTRONIC ARTS

RATING  
**8.0** 10

### Bustin' With Flavor

PC gamers have already had more than their fair share of Sims games and it looks like their console-playing mates are having their turn now. One of the biggest differences between the PC versions and the console ones is that while it is possible to add to the existing game by means of expansion packs and downloads, its console cousins are deprived of such choices.

A new game's a new game. Period. There isn't any continuity and you can't carry over elements of the previous games unless the same features are in the current game. This isn't too much of a concern in Bustin' Out though, because the game is huge.

### Sim-metry

Graphics-wise, Bustin' Out looks way better than its PC predecessors. However, it'd be quite unfair to compare it since the PC version plays in a more isometric view. You can zoom in way closer in this game than in the PC ones for instance. Seen the screenshots for the soon-to-be-released Sims 2? Think of the graphics here as being The Sims 1.5. The character models are done pretty well, though there are some clipping errors with certain facial combinations.

### As-Sim-limated

Bustin' Out is The Sims for the Xbox with a whole lot of extras and an additional mode thrown in. While there isn't much new gameplay-wise, the new story mode should interest fans and keep them busy for more than a while. There's actually a sense of progress as you complete objectives so gamers who didn't like the aimless feel of the original Sims might



CONTEST 042

Continuing from SMS 041, answer the 3 questions below. Note: 1 to 99, 47 for submission.

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Q1) The DS701 Player comes with a \_\_\_\_\_ capacity.

- A) 128MB  
B) 256MB  
C) 312MB

Q2) The FM Tuner stores up to \_\_\_\_\_ channels.

- A) 3  
B) 5  
C) 8

Q3) Which of the following isn't a feature of the DS701 Player?

- A) FM Tuner  
B) Recording  
C) CD Player



Ennyah



## Go Catch 'em All!!

GameBoy Advance gets remakes of good old red and blue versions in Fire Red and Leaf Green!



Check and organize POKéMON that are traveling with you in your party.



"300 monsters at the palm of my hand!! Look at how the cartridges have evolved since Red came out in 1998..."

Pikachu, no wait, Squirtle, no wait, Charmander, no wait... I wanna choose them all!!

Pet collecting frenzy is back again with the second series of Pokémon adventures coming to the GBA, so soon after the successful installments of the Ruby and Sapphire versions. Titled Fire Red and Leaf Green in their Japanese versions (which will be named Red and Blue versions for the US and international variants), these two are, simply put, remakes of the first two Pokémon adventures (the Red and Blue versions), albeit much souped up and better looking.

Now when you put the old versions against the new ones as we have done (yup, we got to play both the Japanese versions, hence you are reading this), the inevitable sense of familiarity creeps back. Naysayers will probably condemn the Fire Red and Leaf Green as a move to milk the Pokémon cash cow to its final drops of, ahem, milk, but this writer begs to differ. Besides looking sooooo much better in full color and at 32-bit resolution no less, the two new or should we say remakes of the Pokémon adventures, sport some very nifty features that would make the paying of a cartridge all the more worthwhile.

### Mora Monsters, Mora Gameplay Time

To be honest, Fire Red and Leaf Green, besides being remakes, are also similar to the "Best of" compilation albums that we find in the music stores today because, hear this, both Fire Red and Leaf Green allows you to catch all, yes, all of them critters going back from Ruby, Sapphire and Colosseum versions, so let's see... that's 300 of them in all!

Gosh, if you are even thinking that the earlier versions take nary a dent in your GBA hours, then be prepared to think again because with the new versions, batteries will quickly dwindle and thumbs will go sore from throwing the 67845th pokeball after the nth failed attempt... thank the gods that the new GBA SP comes with its own in-built rechargeable power source but of course there's always Tiger Balm for those thumbs...

Cosmetic changes aside, the new Pokémon games sport some nice touches that are useful for players as well as those who are new to this Nintendo exclusive franchise. Before every game, players will be treated to a flashback sequence that will recount the most recent events the protagonist player has went through in past games, so that players will not get lost the moment they step back into the world of yellow electric mice and water squirting tortoises.

Another one of the nostalgia inducing elements is that players will realize that maps in the game have been by and large ported over with all the expected aesthetic upgrades, such as the reflective water surfaces and nicer-looking shrubberies, as well as the familiar old tunes that have also been given a spanking new makeover.

### Five's a Company

Perhaps one of the most exciting add-ons to the venerable franchise is the wireless communication tool that will be included with the Fire Red and Leaf Green packages. This allows up to five players to link up wirelessly doing trading and battling. This essentially does away with the messy cable links, and also enables more gamers to appreciate the Pokémon phenomenon.

Whilst the wireless links are currently Fire Red and Leaf Green exclusives, Nintendo has sounded out that they will be available separately in the near future so that current Ruby and Sapphire players can be inducted into the retro craze as well.

Look out for the full review of the international English version in the next issue when we get our hands rough and bruised on it, which should be in most retail stores by the time you read this.



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## Pokémon FireRed Version



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# Rune Midgard Anthology - An Acolyte's Dream

By Jason Woo

In the previous issue, we were introduced to the young acolyte Tellerin and his dreams of becoming a monk. However, before Tellerin even leaves the arched exits of Prontera, he is thrown into a wave of intrigue and conspiracy that will take him to the outer reaches of the Sograt desert and beyond...



## The Griffin's Talon

The Traveller's Inn or otherwise known as the Griffin's Talon stood in front of Tellerin, shielding much of the summer sunlight away from the dazzled eyes of Tellerin whom only moments before was an aspiring acolyte stationed within the Grand Basilica.

According to the parting instructions of Holin, the young man had located the establishment nestled between the low-rise housing that is a signature of the city's Southern quadrant, where it was also the common vending ground for merchants, blacksmiths and potion-concocting alchemists coming from all over Rune-Midgard.

Eager for a warm bed and a meal, Tellerin entered the tavern eagerly.

"So mi'lad, what ye be wantin'?" enquired the innkeeper who introduced himself as Grimt.

"A room for the night, a bath and a meal," replied Tellerin while looking around the inn that was half covered in an appetizing waft rising from the huge hunk of venison, which was rolling over an equally immense spit in the middle of the taproom. The aroma of the cooked meat while inviting was quite another story, especially when mixed with the overhanging aura of dried sweat and stale beer that pervaded the other half of the watering hole.

"Well, if 'tis isn't Holin's lil' boy," squinted Grimt over the bar at the sight of Tellerin's khaki ecclesiastical robes, "which means that ye stay here's provided on old Grimt's house." And without even a split second delay, Grimt immediately ushered the visibly surprised acolyte up a flight of stairs and set him before a thick oak door with a clearly etched "36" on its surface.

"And here's your keys, mi'lad. enjoy ye stay and don't forget to holler if ye be needing any help," beamed Grimt as he stuffed an iron key into the hands of Tellerin and clasped them. "After all, Holin did leave word about ye welfare, ain't risking anything to ensure that comes to pass that's for sure," winked the slightly pudgy innkeeper with a shiny pate and a ruddy nose.

## Robbed!

Tellerin was in short, heartened at the positive reception that he received at the Griffin's Talon although he was seriously expecting a fierce resistance of breaking away from the usually strict Holin. Settling down on his bed, Tellerin finally realized how tired he was and immediately drifted into slumber.

Although Tellerin's body was fast asleep, his mind remained pretty much alert. Probably due to the heightened sense of anticipation at his impending journey - which was perhaps the chief reason why he could respond to the sudden and sharp rustling sound that was coming from his room window.

Opening his eyes slowly, Tellerin managed to catch a glimpse of a figure, female in form, moving in relative stealth while rummaging through his belongings. Wasting no time in getting up, Tellerin sprang towards the thief while the latter's back was turned, hoping to catch the intruder by surprise with a tackle that he once learnt in secret from a Crusader from the Military Wing of the Basilica. However, fast as Tellerin may be, the female thief was way swifter, pulling away and side-stepping Tellerin's surging tackle, the lithe thief pulled out an evil looking dirk and attempted to stab the acolyte with an almost blinding speed. Tellerin managed to just roll aside in time when

the dagger slammed into the floorboard where his face was on moments ago. But before he could effect a counter-attack, the thief pulled out the blade and swung the weapon in a back handed move that resulted in a double slash movement, slicing the hem of Tellerin's tunic and cutting the upper arm of the acolyte.

Grimacing with pain, Tellerin muttered a short prayer and a soft glow enveloped his hand, which he cupped over the fresh wound; in moments the bleeding stopped and the cut flesh closed.

"Who are you and what are you doing in my room?"

"Count yourself walking amongst the dead tonight, infidel! The Masks have heard of your treacherous deeds and will come to finish you even if I fail," hissed the female intruder who under the light of the full moon have revealed herself as more than a house burglar, instead she was a red-robed rogue that Tellerin has only read about in books in the Basilica's library. The red-robes were said to be cold, efficient and deadly killers, although they lacked the grace of their purple-garbed assassin contemporaries.

"Not if I can help it," growled Tellerin as he chanted, "Almighty Father above take my humble heed, grant thy son Your strength and speed!" With an almost immediate effect, Tellerin felt a wave of raw energy surging through his veins and in moments he drew his mace (which he always kept close to him even while sleeping, another offshoot from those soldiering classes that he was spying on), sidestepped the rogue's lunging dirk and slammed the blunt weapon onto the back of the surprised rogue's hand, disarming her.

"You will not hear the last of the Night Masks filthy cut," spat the rogue while nursing her injured wrist. With a deft flip, she had leapt out of the window and disappeared into the yawning darkness below.

By the time, the innkeeper had rushed to the room; Tellerin had gotten over his shock and had related to Grimt about his narrow escape. "Well, at least ye made it with ye life in a piece, but methinks why them Night Masks of Morroc would be wanting with you? Ye best be careful, mi'lad, devilry is surely afoot."

Tellerin was not sure as well. Why an attempt was made at his life? The earlier feelings of a smooth journey were all but gone as he did a quick check on his luggage.

"Darn, she made off with all my zenny!"



To be continued...

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# Patriot games

GAME STRATEGY DEVELOPER: NOKIA PUBLISHER: NOKIA

By Jason Woo

Ye Gods, it's war!!  
GameAxis brings you  
the FIRST Pathway to  
Glory Preview!



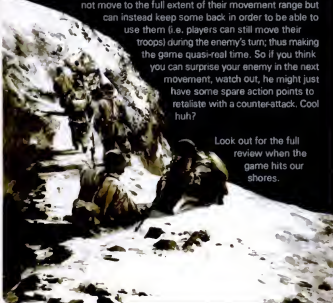
If they say that war is a game for the powerful and the winner gets to write history then Nokia seems to have really grasped the meaning behind these adages, and grasped them well because Pathway to Glory not only makes war into a game but also makes history for being the first handheld war epic for the N-Gage.

Well, the good people at Nokia recently sent us not one, but two preview copies of the game in order to let us have a go at shooting Nazis - multiplayer style. Perhaps the main draw of PiG is its ability to support more than the usual amounts of players via the handheld's Bluetooth technology, which is usually up to 4. Now the warring experience can be extended to six players!

Besides the obvious groupie fun PiG offers, we are blown away by the level of graphic intensity and fidelity to history, such as how the buildings and environments are being appropriately and properly "spirit-ized" into detailed little avatars of their actual models. You're right, the game developers actually took the effort to recreate some of the actual architecture involved in the war and ported them into the game, making the PiG experience something to remember long after the last shot's been fired. Those who have played Eidos' famed Commandos series would not doubt be familiar with the gameplay of PiG. You basically control a team of five elite soldiers each with their unique abilities and strengths combining in a total of 14 solo-player missions.

The preview is pretty much the final product but it comes with only the first mission that involves you blowing up a water-tank that is supplying the Italian troops on the North African Island of Pantelleria. Combat is a turn-based affair as the player moves his troops into position (a chess) before taking shots at enemies within firing range. The difference in the turn-based system is that Nokia has added a further touch of strategy by having "action points"; troops need not move to the full extent of their movement range but can instead keep some back in order to be able to use them (i.e. players can still move their troops) during the enemy's turn; thus making the game quasi-real time. So if you think you can surprise your enemy in the next movement, watch out, he might just have some spare action points to retaliate with a counter-attack. Cool huh?

Look out for the full review when the game hits our shores.



# Memoirs of an N-Gager

Writer Cai Jiahui pens a piece of her own experiences revolving around Nokia's mobile game deck and tells readers how the N-Gage could have been so much better if she just had her way...

## And Thus Begins My Story...

My first piece on the N-Gage could not have been written at a more opportune time. At this very moment, my N-Gage is under repair due to over-exposure to moisture. This was the conclusion the staffs at the friendly Nokia service centre came to after the preliminary examinations. I was to collect it the day before but the phone failed unexpectedly during testing. It appears I now have to wait longer and hope for the best. I had asked about how my phone could be so badly damaged. It wasn't as if I had soaked it in water or anything even remotely similar. The reply was that it could be caused by something as innocuous as my sweaty palms.

Admittedly, I had placed my phone in a bag together with a water bottle that could have caused the interior of the bag to be more humid. However, I suspect that my seriously sweaty palms were the major cause especially since I've been using my phone more often during the past couple of weeks.

Now, despite all the improvements made to the N-Gage QD, many of my friends would prefer the original N-Gage because of its extra features (built-in MP3, Radio, etc...) and of course, there are still others who would rather get a Gameboy Advance (GBA) instead.

## So What More Do You Want From It?

Quite obviously, I'd like a more water-resistant game deck: one that is not only resistant to sweaty palms, but is also watertight enough in the event when drinks spill. Since the upcoming Sony PSP will have a 4.3" screen and the Nintendo DS, not one but TWO screens, Nokia might

consider enlarging the screens of future N-Gage models to provide some serious competition. This might make for a larger N-Gage but a flip-top might solve the size issue.



The current MMC slot on the QD still looks a bit primitive because the cover, despite being rubber, is still susceptible to breaking. An infrared port is definitely a welcome addition because not every phone in the market is Bluetooth-enabled yet, and not everyone possesses a Bluetooth adaptor. Also, the MP3/Radio function (together with Stereo sound) is definitely a major attraction and I would want it in the next N-Gage after the QD.

Understandably, if Nokia were to implement my recommendations, the price of the phone is going to skyrocket. Game companies regularly make losses on their consoles, expecting to break even from game sales but it is a little different in this situation. Unlike the Xbox that can double up as DVD players if you are willing to purchase the separate DVD Kit, the N-Gage is a multi-functional device the moment you open the box. This means that lowering the price might not be a good sales strategy because people would then buy the phone for functions other than gaming.

## Let's start with a brief summary of what the N-Gage and the N-Gage QD have to offer.



### N-GAGE

- MP3 player and radio function
- Side-latching which makes owner look ridiculous
- Power casing feels very brittle and looks cheap
- Unlucky as compared to regular phones although it is flat
- USB connection and Bluetooth
- Battery life is too short for phone to function as a decent gaming device
- Screen is not bright enough in daylight
- Unlucky to remove the battery before changing the MMC
- B key can be depressed to bring up the context menu



### N-GAGE QD

- Amplified with no MP3 or radio function
- Side-latching in the normal position so owner doesn't look out of place talking into it
- Power casing looks sturdier with rubber parts so it appears shock-resistant and generally more pleasing to the human eye
- Smaller but slightly thicker
- Bluetooth only
- Battery lasts longer
- Screen is significantly brighter
- MMC slot at the side similar to Gameboy Advance
- A pad cannot be depressed



# games on the go

By Jason Woo

## TOP 10 java titles

to keep you busy for the next ten minutes!

Java games are getting more and more advanced nowadays – besides your usual futuristic vertical-scrolling spacecraft shooter, you have simulators, beat-'em-ups and more. No wonder people nowadays are so inseparable from their little Nokias, Samsungs and what-nots. Here are some flavor of the month that GameAxis feels you cannot afford not having a go at!

## MONSTER PETS

**RATING**  
7.0 /10

 • GENRE: SIMULATION • CODE: 260508 • DOWNLOAD: [www.nokia.com.sg](http://www.nokia.com.sg)


### Animals 'R' Us!

Tagamochi lovers unite! Fans of the handheld pet rearing, poop clearing simulator have another reason to love their mobile phones even more by downloading Monster Pets where you can fulfill your dreams of pet ownership with a little dash of Pokemon thrown in. You are right, I said Pokemon because these little virtual beasts can be engaged in competitive fights for your entertainment without the added risk of SPCAs' wrath bearing upon you.

### OUR LOVE:

- Fun and absorbing gameplay which is always the case when a pet's life is at stake, virtual or not.
- Great time killer due to the amount of minutes you will need to nurture a pet in a sitting.
- Pet rearing is more fun in full color!

### OUR GRIPES:

- May be tedious to some who want instant gratification

### CELEBRITY MOST LIKELY TO PLAY THIS GAME:



"Even better than the original's 'virtual pet' formula!"

### CELEBRITY LEAST LIKELY TO PLAY THIS GAME:



"The guy's got his own croc."

## BON BONN FUNNY FACES

**RATING**  
7.5 /10

 • GENRE: STRATEGY • CODE: 260509 • DOWNLOAD: [www.nokia.com.sg](http://www.nokia.com.sg)


When you are done with stacking bricks, you can proceed on to faces...

Unlike Tetris where the objective is to stack bricks so that they form a straight line, Bon Bonn Funny Faces works somewhat differently and require a set of strategy in order to keep the game moving. Players need to rearrange the bricks with different faces on them so that three of the same face bricks are aligned, thus eliminating the trio and bringing down more face bricks. Rinse and repeat. However, there's a time limit so don't take your time thinking it over or it is game over.

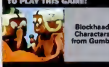
### OUR LOVE:

- A simple game and surprisingly addictive game, you can spend literally minutes upon minutes aligning the faces and generating an all-time top score!
- Cutey setting appeals to a whole range of crowd from young to old.

### OUR GRIPES:

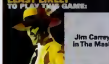
- Nothing more beyond the timed and practice modes where the latter has no timing taken, hence more newbie friendly.

### CELEBRITY MOST LIKELY TO PLAY THIS GAME:



"Blockhead Characters from Gummy"

### CELEBRITY LEAST LIKELY TO PLAY THIS GAME:



"The rubber faced one's favourite Jiva pastime"



## TETRIS BLUE

 • GENRE: STRATEGY • CODE: 260473 • DOWNLOAD: [www.nokia.com.sg](http://www.nokia.com.sg)

### Stack the bricks!

A well loved classic that has its roots since we knew handwheels (think Nintendo GameBoys). This Russian-born game is almost as old as any one of you reading this. Why would you think that it has since spawned so many incarnations and versions over and over again and on all platforms conceivable? Much akin to the

Rubik's Cube in the sense where you must make the same colors get together on the same face of the cube, the players' aim in Tetris Blue would be to align the blocks coming down in order to form a straight line with the base and the entire length disappears. As you progress, the blocks will come down faster and quick-thinking will be needed.

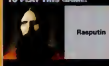
### OUR LOVE:

- Really, really addictive.
- The option to customize difficulty is a boon for newbies (although who can be possibly new to the game?)

### OUR GRIPES:

- Nothing new that hasn't been done before – so if you are looking for something groundbreaking, this ain't the game.

### CELEBRITY MOST LIKELY TO PLAY THIS GAME:



"Rasputin"

### CELEBRITY LEAST LIKELY TO PLAY THIS GAME:



"Bob the Builder"

### 10. POOL TIME

### 09. RACING FEVER 2

(or those who don't own a real car)



### 08. MOBILE SOCCER MANAGER

### 07. BIG 2

(now your dreams to be the God of Gamblers)



### 06. COMZUS BOWLING



### 05. THREE KINGDOMS MAH JONG

(who says Chinese Literature is boring?)



### 04. G-MODE RALLY



### 03. MEOW

(one for the animal lovers)

### 02. TETRIS BLUE

### 01. BUMPER 2

(now you know why pinball machines were once a fave for school kids, they're addictive)



# Cheaters WILL prosper!!

By Jason Woo

Stuck in some games and tearing your hair out? You can save a trip to the hair regrowth people if you take heed of our selection of cheat codes this month. So is your accused game featured this month? If it is, good for you, if not, then just settle for some foliose pain for the moment while we try to salvage something for you next month...

## PC



### THIEF III: DEADLY SHADOWS

#### Faster lock picking

Make sure that your lockpick starts from one side of the lock. Now while the lockpick is in a circular movement while pressing the attack button rapidly because the attack button will make the lock picking of the sweet spots instantaneous hence the faster speed.

#### Extra Loot

In your first mission where you are in your apartment block, locate the landlord's room and pick the lock (look out for the guard of course) and enter. Find a stray journal and read the directions to a particular spot where a stash of loot is hidden. Grab it. Now you are a little richer than you should be. Grady (a villain) you stole that? There is a valuable cat statuette plus assorted knick knacks lying around for your filthy fingers. Enjoy.

## GAMECUBE



### TALES OF SYMPHONIA

#### Easy gold and experience

Every time you get to a warp door in the Earth Temple where there's a dragon, just keep fighting the dragon for as long as you want to. Each time you defeat the brute, you net for yourself 10K in cold hard gold and another 800-1000 experience points make it all the sweeter. A point to note though, the experience takings will decrease as you get to higher levels although the gold takings will still remain the same.

#### Get the Kusingal Blade

When you get to the Ossa trail, there's a secret monster at the end of the cave where Sheena pops out of. You will find it where the caves end with a black skull. This monster is called Sword Dancer and boasts a whopping 9,999 HP (depends on which side of a level if you looking at it from but preferably from a comfortable level 20). The first time you beat the crap outta him, you get a Yata Mirror, push him over a second time and the Kusingal Blade is yours for keeps.

## XBOX



### TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

#### Do all your stunts...in ZERO gravity

Input noforce or getup as a cheat in the Options menu.

#### Get Perfect Manual

Input keepisteady in the Cheats menu.

#### Perfect Rail Balance

Input leftvalde or sweetbalance in the Cheats menu.



### RED DEAD REVOLVER

#### Pick ya levels!

Finish the game with an "excellent" rank for each level, and then go to the main menu and press and hold R and L triggers and X, Y, Y. And voila! To get an "Excellent" rank on each level, immediately restart a level if you did not earn it the first time round.

#### Increase Max Health Level

During the bar brawl, go upstairs and talk to the woman in a bathtub and she will sell you a bath that will increase your health level.

## PLAYSTATION 2



### ONIMUSHA 3: DEMON SIEGE

#### Max out health

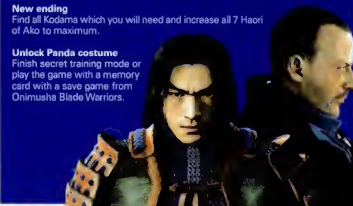
Finish the game on hard mode. Now start a new game and during gameplay press L1, L2, R1, R2, Circle, Square, Triangle, Circle.

#### New ending

Find all Kodama which you will need and increase all 7 Haori of Ako to maximum.

#### Unlock Panda costume

Finish secret training mode or play the game with a memory card with a save game from Onimusha Blade Warriors.



# Inspired?



Sports Day 17/3/04



Fun World 21/4/04



Botanic Garden 5/11/04



China 8/2/04

## Where's yours?

**PHOTO**  
IDEAS ©NSPIRE ©INNOVATION

Be it nature, kids, sports or any other theme, send us a selection of your best images of subjects based around a common theme so that we can share your work to the rest of the world. Check out [www.photoi.com.sg](http://www.photoi.com.sg) on how you can get your copy of PHOTOi.



# dvd attack!

Should you add it to your DVD collection, or avoid it like the plague? We watch the good ones and tell you about it. By Chad Lim

Better off watching tv.

Just rent it or borrow it.

No emotional scars after viewing.

Let's see that again!

Get it! Get it now!

DVDs provided by CineNow

## HELLBOY (2 Disc Widescreen Edition)



MOVIE RATING:  
○○○●○

DVD RATING:  
○○○○○●

Commentary by director Guillermo del Toro and co-executive producer Mike Mignola  
Introduction by Ron Perlman, Selma Blair, Rupert Evans, and Jeffrey Tambor  
Theatrical trailers, TV spots  
Introduction by Guillermo del Toro  
All-new DVD comics: eight branching DVD comics by Mike Mignola

"Hellboy: The Seeds of Creation": a 2.5-hour documentary on the making of the film  
"Right Hand of Doom: Set Visits": behind-the-scenes branching feature  
Feature-length storyboard track  
Video introduction by Selma Blair  
Three deleted scenes (with optional commentary by Guillermo del Toro)  
Number of discs: 2

### DVD Extras

In *Dice One*, the commentaries are top notch. Director del Toro and screenwriter Mike Mignola offer up the kind of commentary that gives fans a great insight into the film. The other features are great additions. "The Right Hand of Doom" is a behind-the-scenes look at the film.

"The Seeds of Creation" is a documentary that actually runs longer than the film.

This is extensive and an absolute wonderful extra on the second disc is especially good for those who like to see the nuts and bolts of making a movie. The deleted scenes aren't exciting—once you watch them, it's like seeing why they were left out. Still, it's the extras that make this one of the better DVD releases this year.

The movie starts off back in 1944 off the coast of Scotland during World War II. Hitler's minions, led by Rasputin (Karel Roden), who is trying to open a portal to Hell in search of a powerful demon/god to help them destroy their enemies. An American expedition destroys the gateway, but not before a demon baby crawls through. It grows up to be Hellboy (Ron Perlman), a wise-cracking, cigar-chomping, beer drinking guy's guy. Hellboy works for the American government as a covert FBI agent and his job is to help "clean up" and destroy other monsters that have slipped into our world. But now, he must stop Rasputin from fulfilling his 60 year plan to open the gates of Hell.

As you can guess, the script's narrative is clear and not confusing. Essentially, if Hellboy doesn't stop evil from bringing on the apocalypse, we're screwed. Yep, it's just that simple. Some of movie's funniest moments stems from the subplot of a love triangle between Hellboy, Agent John Myers (Rupert Evans), and Liz Sherman (Selma Blair). Even that is quite clear.



Still, despite its simple script, Ron Perlman is perfectly cast as the title character as attested by fans of the comic. He's a big dude with bad sunburn and looks way too much like Ted Danson. But the way he manages to toss off those corny one-liners and make it all seem completely natural and in-character is commendable. It is also mind-boggling to see how he can emoter from under all of that make-up and be menacing and goofily romantic all at the same time

The Hellboy comics are a gold mine for ideas. This film which is based on the cult comics is not the best, but good enough as a "first outing". In the ongoing deluge of comic-book adaptations, Hellboy certainly ranks well above average. Still, it's one of those movies that garners reactions that are all over the map. Some love it, some loathe it, and some just think it's decent. But it sure beats that blind dude who knows no fear.

## HAUNTED MANSION



MOVIE RATING:  
○○○○○●

DVD RATING:  
○○○○○●

Dice One  
Deleted Scene & Blooper  
Haunted Mansion Attraction  
Virtual Tour  
Explores The Mansion With Ghost Guides Ezra and Emma  
Raven "Superstition" Music Video  
The Making Of "The Mansion"  
Behind The Scenes Look At Making The Haunted Mansion  
Anatomy Of A Scene: Ghost In The Graveyard

The movie is based on The Haunted Mansion ride at Disneyland and has always been a firm favorite with visitors but while the movie uses many elements from the attraction, the short time you spend on the ride is a lot more entertaining than the eighty-seven minutes you spend watching this film. The queue line might even provide more relief.

The movie goes like this. Jim Evers (Eddie Murphy) is a hard working realtor always looking to make yet another sale. When his wife and business partner, Sara (Marsha Thomason) is summoned to an old, mansion to discuss the sale by the owner, Edward Gracey (Nathaniel Parker), Jim smells a big deal. Instead of keeping his promise to take the family away for the weekend, he heads to the manor with his two kids. While there, a violent downpour washes out the road to the remote estate and the Evers family must stay the night.



Does anyone remember a time when Eddie Murphy was funny? Sadly, the man has become as funny as watching your dad dance. He is supposed to be a comedian but in many of his latest movies (not including his voice work for Shrek) he has played an ordinary guy and relied on others to provide the laughs. No funny animals to help him out in this time though. The comic relief bits are not funny and the story doesn't make much sense. The movie is all special effects and no substance as it tries to feel like a spectacle and not a piece of story telling. Ideas for a storyline seem to have died along with the occupants of the mansion.

Perhaps it's fitting that so many of these characters are ghosts, because by the end of this movie you'll be glad they're all dead and you'll wish you were, too. It's a movie of ghosts and we guess that's why it's lifeless. Save your money for the trip to Disneyland instead.



### DVD Extras

The DVD bonus features include a behind-the-scenes special revealing the secrets of making The Haunted Mansion and how the filmmakers did their best to translate the ride into a movie. Rob Minkoff, Rick Baker and others are interviewed about the ride, making and designing zombies.

You also get to see how the visually stunning graveyard scene was put together how they made all those ghosts interact with each other. Or you can go exploring the Haunted Mansion via your remote control, with help

from your ghostly guides, Ezra and Emma. There's only one deleted scene to select from, some outtakes which like the movie are not that funny. There's also the "Superstition" music video performed by Raven Simone.

The DVD-ROM part offers some other worthwhile bonuses. "Murphy Ghost Host Maker" allows the user to transform a picture of you into something more ghastly. Well, if you can't get scared by the movie, might as well by scaring yourself.

## THE LAST SAMURAI

(Widescreen Edition)



MOVIE RATING:



DVD RATING:



**Disc One:**  
Theatrical Film With Commentary  
by director Edward Zwick

**Disc Two:**  
Deleted Scenes with commentary  
**History vs. Hollywood:**  
The Last Samurai (History Channel  
Documentary)

**Tom Cruise:**  
A Warrior's Journey  
**Edward Zwick:**  
Director's Video Journal

**Making an Epic:**  
A Conversation with Edward Zwick  
and Tom Cruise

**A World of Detail:**  
Production Design with Lilly Kivert

**Silk and Armor:**  
Costume Design with Ngila Dickson  
Imperial Army Basic Training

**From Soldier to Samurai:**  
The Weapons  
Japan Premieres (Tokyo & Kyoto red  
carpet)

**Theatrical Trailer**  
**Number of discs:** 2

### DVD Extras

The DVD extras certainly don't disappoint in terms of special features. The first disc housing a commentary track with director Edward Zwick discusses the historical aspect of the film and its relevance to American legend, the use of costumes, set design and computer imagery to create the desired effect, and the editing trickery used for the complex battle sequences. It's also interesting to hear of his influences for the film.

Moving on to disc two, there are four rather large features to look over on the first page of extras. Tom Cruise: A Warrior's Journey looks at Cruise's character and his motivations for how he is portrayed. There are plenty of clips from the film used in amongst interviews with Cruise, Zwick and a few other major players. The three-minute feature is worth a look, though it does have an element of "press kit" material.

Captain Nathan Algren (Tom Cruise), a washed-up Civil War soldier tormented by guilt and alcoholism, gets recruited to train and modernise the Japanese Imperial Army. The Land of the Rising Sun, in the fervour of the Meiji Restoration, idolises everything Western and that means game over for the country's samurai who believe in the old ways. However, not all of them are willing to throw in their swords and armor for some single shot Winchester rifle and mass-produced tight fitting uniforms. Not without a fight at least. So Algren finds himself, in command of a motley and ill-trained force, facing-off against rogue samurai leader Katsumoto (Ken Watanabe). Suffice to say that things don't go entirely as planned, and Algren finds himself defeated and taken hostage by Katsumoto's samurai band. In his captivity though, he learns the ways of a true samurai (and the Japanese language) and he becomes a samurai and ultimately joins them in their final stand against the Imperial forces. Well, if Mr Miyagi's household chores can teach karate to a kid, this should be possible too.

The plot is also a bit too reminiscent of Kevin Costner's Oscar-winning Western epic Dances with Wolves. In fact, it would be tempting to write this off as simply "Dances with Sushi," if



it didn't have so many other things going for it. The Last Samurai is a grand spectacle to watch, the movie is beautifully shot, the landscapes and backdrops are breathtaking. The battle scenes are pretty awesome too with its realism. They are not Lord of the Rings incredible but it sure comes close. The first battle where the samurai are revealed is beautiful, scary, and haunting all at the same time and it really sets the tone for everything to come and establishes in short order what the samurai are about.

If there's a quarrel with the movie is that it can get a little too long at times, but with Ken Watanabe's performance, it's worth the while. Like some Ah Beng said after the movie at the cinema: "Wa (tainabe si beh hoh!" This is a commanding performance from the Japanese actor. Every time he graces the screen he grabs your attention. He oozes honour and respect as the leader of the rebellion, pulled between loyalty to the Emperor and his modernising ways and the traditions a samurai should live on.

This is definitely a great film. The Last Samurai is a grand, powerful and epic story of progress, honour and the chance for redemption and it really does hold its own.

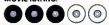


## 50 FIRST DATES

(Widescreen Edition)



MOVIE RATING:



DVD RATING:



**Disc One:**  
Commentary by Drew Barrymore and  
director Peter Segal

**Theatrical trailer:**  
Five deleted scenes with optional  
director commentary

**The Dating Scene:**  
The Making of 50 First Dates

**Music videos:**  
"Hold Me Now" by Wayne Wonder,  
live performance of "Amber" by 311,  
"Love Song" by 311

**Gag reel:**  
Talent "Piglin" featurette  
**Number of discs:** 1

Hawaiian theme park veterinarian Henry Roth (Adam Sandler) is a womanizer who specializes in seducing female tourists. One morning he wanders into a local restaurant and finds the perfect woman, Lucy Whitmore (Drew Barrymore) and falls head over heels for her. When he has a good time and arrange to meet again. When she sees her the following day, she hasn't a clue as to who he is. Why? As it turns out, Lucy suffers from a rare brain disorder after her car accident a year ago that wipes her short term memory clean every night. Waking up every morning Lucy follows the same routine, as though it were the day of her accident, with her father (Blake Clark) and brother (Sean Astin) maintaining a rather elaborate charade to protect her from the truth. With the help of his best friend Ula (Rob Schneider), Henry has to concoct new and increasingly clever ways to meet Lucy and get her to fall in love with him again every single day.

First off, if you can get past the requirement that you have to believe that any character played by Adam Sandler is a womanizer – as suggested in the opening scenes – then you're well on your way to enjoying the movie. For the first time since The Wedding Singer, Drew Barrymore and Adam Sandler team up again for another comedy and it works. They won the MTV Award for Best



On-Screen Team, and they do click together in a quiet and understated way. They were extremely lovable in The Wedding Singer and with this movie these two are probably becoming the dynamic duo of romantic comedies replacing Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.

As expected, all of Adam Sandler's regulars are here in this film, but it's Rob Schneider who steals it as the local shark bite victim Ula. Talk about your 'side splitting sidekick'. Sean Astin, fresh from the Lord of the Rings trilogy, also contributes to the comedy as Lucy's lisp, dim-witted steroid-using brother with a wardrobe of fishnet shirts.

If you've seen Groundhog Day you will no doubt recognize the concept of 50 First Dates. It's that same idea of living out one day over and over again. Fans of The Wedding Singer will also no doubt recognise some ideas as it's all too familiar. The 80s soundtrack, Sandler coming up with his own song for Drew, it's all there.

Still, despite all of its similarities to the other movies, 50 First Dates is sweet and sincere. There's a nice blend of comedy and romantic ideas at work here and chemistry of the two leads along with the usual proven formula makes it a very decent movie to watch. Once again.



### DVD Extras

The commentary by Drew Barrymore and director Peter Segal is rather enjoyable and Drew Barrymore offers up quite a few more-than-honest opinions and comments as she always does. There were some good deleted scenes, but the director does a good job of explaining why they were cut. The Comedy Central Real Comedy special with Rob Schneider as a show host in his Ula character doesn't really quite cut it. The blooper reel is also fairly ordinary. The DVD doesn't quite excel, with its blend of supplements but the movie is sure worth a recommendation.



# Final Fantasy: THE SPIRITS WITHIN

The year is 2065 AD and Earth is under siege. A meteor has crashed into the planet, unleashing millions of alien creatures, which leave a swathe of death and destruction wherever they go. Cities are deserted, populations are stopped, and unless these alien invaders are decimated, they will soon destroy all forms of life on the planet.

The survivors of the initial onslaught have retreated to barrier cities built to keep the aliens out. But with these few cities around the globe now falling into decline, the fate of humanity now rests with the brilliant and beautiful Dr. Aki Ross.

Terminally infected by an alien, Aki holds the key to uncovering the secrets to these alien invaders. Under the guidance of her mentor, Dr. Sid, and with the aid of the Deep Eyes military

squadron led by Captain Gray Edwards, Aki scours the planet searching for the eight spirit waves she believes can save the Earth and herself.

But her quest is jeopardised by the vengeful General Hein, who plans to use a devastating space cannon to annihilate the aliens instead, even if it means destroying Earth in the process.

With time running out, Aki must now fight the alien predators, the enemy within herself, as well as the scheming Hein if she hopes to succeed.

From the creators of the highly popular Final Fantasy game franchise, Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within is a groundbreaking CGI film featuring some of the best computer graphics ever to grace an animated feature.



Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within copyright © 2004 Sony Pictures Television International. All Rights Reserved.



## Digimon ADVENTURE

While attending summer holiday camp, some kids are unexpectedly teleported to a digital world known as DigWorld. Lost and alone, they are befriended by strange little creatures called Digimons. Soon, these kids and their Digimon friends become inseparable.

As the kids try to find their way home, they soon learn that they didn't come to this digital world by accident. A dark force threatens not just DigWorld, but their own human world as well. As the chosen "DigiDestined," they have to now find a way to save both worlds from this evil force.

Through teamwork and trust, the kids must help their Digimon friends evolve (or "digiolve") from "monsters in training" into mighty champions. Only then will they have a chance against the evil Digimons and their mysterious Dark Masters. These kids must also find the eighth DigiDestined, another chosen child who would join them in their quest. Who is this child, and can they get to him or her before their enemies?

Bonded by friendship and steeled by their determination, the kids and their Digimon companions embark on the journey of a lifetime!

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*Professional PC Game Controller with Vibration Feedback*

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- Supports Digital/Analog/Racing game mode option
- Full command of four triggers, eight-way D-pad, two mini-sticks and ten programmable buttons
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**G-12PS**  
PSII & II Compatible  
Game Pad



**F-31U Vibration**  
Vibration PC Joystick



**Speed Wheel 3**  
Vibration  
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System



# the GIRL'S uide to gamer GUYS

Not quite the real thing, but just as good!

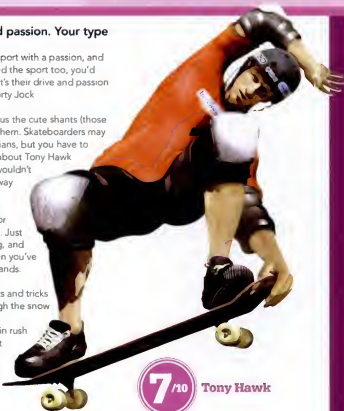
## The bruises, battle scars and passion. Your type is the Sporty Jock

You know the sort – they love their sport with a passion, and if it weren't for the fact that you loved the sport too, you'd probably never see these guys. But it's their drive and passion that we love so much about the Sporty Jock

It's those cute sneakers that do it. Plus the cute shants (those short pants) and that cool air about them. Skateboarders may be the bane of parents and pedestrians, but you have to admit there's something pretty fun about Tony Hawk and the rest of his pro-skaters. Who wouldn't want to be able to defy gravity the way these guys do?

These skater boys get a **7/10**, just for looking cute while riding the streets. Just be careful if he's over 25, still skating, and not anywhere near being a pro! Then you've just got an overgrown kid on your hands.

It's tricky! Those death defying stunts and tricks that they execute while flying through the snow and trying to get to the finish line is unbelievable! Maybe it's the adrenalin rush you get watching them perform, but the fellas of SSX3 - Brodi, Eddie, JP, Mac, Luther, Moby and Paymon - all have their own little traits that we love (or love to hate) so there's a guy for every taste.



**7/10** Tony Hawk

What makes it better is that it's easy to change their dressing (something all girls love to do!) so you can get creative with your guy and swap his shirts, his pants, and everything else. Just don't expect to have him in a suit anytime soon.

These snowboarders get an **8/10**, for being flexible enough to wear different outfits, plus they look pretty damn cool coming down those slopes!



We all know that guys like to have a good look at girls, especially the cute ones. But that doesn't mean that us girls have to settle for just being good and keeping our eyes to ourselves. There are plenty of great looking guys out there with great skills to match. What's more, they make pretty good companions, and won't ever abandon you in your time of need. Here's the GameAxis girl's guide to all the best guys in games! By Nova\*

## It's the stealthy Super Spies that get you going

Alright so they may be good at sneaking around, and they're surely very charming and debonair when they need to be. But which super spy doesn't look great in a suit?

Protecting the world from itself. It's a big responsibility for any man to handle, but Snake from Metal Gear Solid seems to take it all in his stride. He fights off the enemy like it's the easiest thing to do, and all without breaking as much as a sweat. Although he seems to be a bit of a loner, (or probably just one of those guys that 'doesn't do partners'), Snake has the sort of confidence and just enough aggression to make you feel like the world just could be a safer place with him around.

The ultimate hero Snake gets a **6/10** from us. Although he's strong, and good at what he does, his wardrobe needs a bit of an update. And that army print headband is just a tad too '80s. Come to the 21st Century Snake! There are plenty of women waiting here for you...

He takes his job seriously, and even if that means having to kill along the way to protect the people of Earth, then Sam Fisher from Splinter Cell is the perfect man. He travels the world following the bad guys to get to the bottom of all the conspiracies and schemes. Needless to say, that means he'll be a guy that's good at listening and deciphering, although whether or not he might be able to completely decipher a woman is another thing altogether.

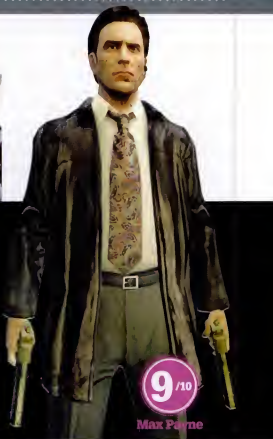
Sam isn't the best looking out there in the spy field, but he's a hard worker and he'll do his best to get things done. So he gets a **7/10**, also because when you're in a job like being a spy, you never know when your guy might come home. If he comes home at all.

## OVERALL WINNER

Tony Hawk	7/10
Guys from SSX 3	8/10
Solid Snake	6/10
Sam Fisher	7/10
Dante	7/10
Max Payne	9/10
Samanosuke & Jacques!	10/10



**7**/10 Dante



**9**/10  
Max Payne

### All muscle, all man. The Action Hero is the one for you.

He's truly the man's man. He grunts and moves all the heavy things. When evil things come his way, with just a flick of his wrist he can kill them all! How can a girl not feel safe with a manly man around?

He's got that mystery about him – the long overcoat with the long flowing hair – it's just something about him that you can't figure out, but at the same time you can't take yourself away from him. Dante from Devil May Cry 3 is great with the weapons (which could translate to him being good with his hands) plus his extra skills and special strength makes him flexible and quick on his feet. What girl wouldn't want a guy like that around to protect her?

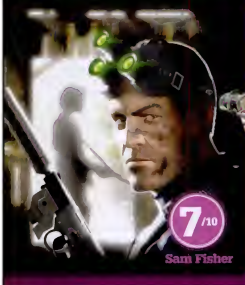
Action man Dante gets a 7/10 from us. Just watch out for his family because he seems to have quite a few issues with them.

He's the epitome of suave style and wit as he fights crime in the big city. Max Payne has the dashing good looks of James Dean and a young Sean Connery. His sharp suits and nifty handwork with the guns shows that he knows what he's doing, and he'll do what he has to. And we know he lives by his heart, especially when he avenged the death of his wife and child (aww shucks).

Max Payne earns himself a 9/10, because you can't get anything better than a stylish man (civil servant at that) who's not afraid to fall in love.



**6**/10



**7**/10  
Sam Fisher

### Or maybe Guys from your darkest Fantasy?

If you find that one action hero just isn't enough for you (maybe you're the sort that needs to get rescued a lot!) then Onimusha 3 is perfect. There's a choice of two guys that you can pick, and there's plenty of both of them to go around. And what's even better is that either one of them will definitely be able to suit your type.

Although Jean Reno (Jacques Blanc in the game) is slightly balding, he's got that wonderfully sexy French accent, and that air of wisdom about him. It's almost like you'd never have to worry about anything, because he'd have a solution to any problem around. You just might have a bit of problem trying to

completely understand what he was saying.

If you're more the sort that likes good looks with a deep sexy voice, then Takeshi Kaneshiro (Samanosuke Akechi in Onimusha 3) is definitely the one for you. Those mysterious eyes and that brooding look is enough to melt any woman's heart. Plus he gets to kick a lot of evil butts in the game. Strong, sexy AND a good guy! What else could you ask for?

The Onimusha 3 guys get **10/10**. Simply because they're cute, they're sexy, they're the good guys and did we mention they're cute?



**10**

Samanosuke & Jacques



# FROCKS

## populi

Fretting over the lack of wardrobe choices and that big outing is looming? Check out this month's selection for him and her and score points with that special someone or the elusive fashion police by being seen in them.



**FOR HER**  
All items from J.C. Penney



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01



02



03



04



05



06



07



08

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## CONTEST 043

Contestants must SMS the 3 answers to us. Refer to pg. 47 for instructions.

# the JEDI ACADEMY Wants you!

Think you make the cut for the Jedi Academy, young Padawan? Well prove it to us by answering the bottom 3 questions and you might just be one of 3 lucky Jedis to walk away with a Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy game for the Xbox! So answer the three questions correctly and SMS the answers to us! (Closing date for last entry is 30th September 2004)

Q1) Jedi Academy is Xbox Live compatible.

- A) True
- B) False
- C) I don't know

Q2) Jedi Academy is published by

- A) Activision
- B) Blizzard Entertainment
- C) Square-Enix

Q3) You can now hold up to \_\_\_\_ lightsabers in Jedi Academy.

- A) 1
- B) 3
- C) 4



# it's alive!! my ZOIDS are alive!!



» Blossom Liger by Edmund

Product customization, or modification, is no longer a new thing in the rest of the world. But it is still a relatively fresh concept here in Singapore, where consumers are getting to be just a tad more educated and adventurous than before. Formerly limited to early Tamiya model cars then to game consoles, which in turn saw model sets being the next realm for toy enthusiasts to stamp their very own mark upon. The Gundam model are still one of the best examples of toy customization for example.

But the recent Zoids fair in Takashimaya unveiled the fact that these mechanized toys, so darn popular in the eighties, are making a big comeback in the form of rigorous marketing and fans support. Speaking of fan support, do you know that there is a group of Zoids fans who customize their very own Zoids models? The GameAxis crew made their way down to the Zoids fair in Takashimaya recently, and caught sight of some of the beautifully crafted Zoids. We talked to the customizers of these models and find out what goes on in their minds as they create their next masterpiece...

## GameAxis (GaX)

**Sandra (S)** (creator of The Maharajah, Eidol and Gunblaze Zoids)

**Francis Ng (F)** (long-time collector and recent customizer)

**Edmund Tan (E)** (creator of the God, Blockade, Blossom and Blaster Ligers)



» Gunblaze by Sandra



» The Maharajah by Sandra



» Eidol by Sandra



» God Liger by Edmund



» Blaster Liger by Edmund

## GaX: When did you start to create your own customized Zoids?

- S:** May 2004.  
**F:** One month before the exhibition.  
**E:** Early 2004.

## GaX: What got you started?

- S:** The mechanics and designs of the Zoids got me hooked but after some time, I realized that I could make them look more interesting through customization.  
**F:** I've wanted to try it a long time back, but could never find time until recently (you should see my backlog of unbuilt Zoids!).  
**E:** Zoids already comes with some basic (but limited) level of customization so it opened the door to thinking "I wish I could add this to that". Also I found some really cool customs on the web (mainly by Japanese Zoiders) and got inspired from there.

## GaX: Where did you learn the necessary skills to customize your Zoids?

- S:** Through online websites and forums.  
**F:** Nowhere. I merely bought a knife and happily started cutting and gluing bits together. I had received lots of help on painting from the guys at Katoots ([www.katoots.com](http://www.katoots.com)).

## GaX: Which model was your first customized Zoid based on?

- S:** It's got to be the Elephant.  
**F:** It's a modified Dilbon.

## GaX: What does the process of making customized Zoids entail?

- S:** First we envision the look of the Zoid, then we go out and source for the parts needed, and of course the final steps of assembling and painting.  
**F:** Fracture a wrist, take 2 weeks of MC, and have a girlfriend who'll help you do the spraying! (laughs)

## GaX: What are the basic tools needed to produce a customized Zoid?

- S:** Some paint, brushes, glue, penknife, and lots of patience.  
**E:** A Tamiya toolkit is great although it's not strictly essential (but you do feel like a pro when using it). Cans of primer and soft Chinese paintbrushes and Tamiya paint.

## GaX: How long do you take to create a customized Zoid?

- S:** About two days.  
**E:** When I hit my stride, about a week for each custom.

## GaX: What do you plan to do with your hobby? Any plans to go commercial?

- S:** Nope, it's just a hobby right now.  
**E:** I don't even know where I can display them. Some folks have offered to buy certain pieces but I can't bear to break up a set. We are currently discussing some options for limited edition casts on an international scale with some other customizers in the US.

## GaX: Which model is your favorite Zoid?

- S:** Energy Liger!  
**F:** I absolutely love the Energy Liger.

## GaX: What do you play games (console, PC, etc)? If yes, what titles?

- S:** Pokemon on the GBA, and any Squaresoft games.  
**F:** Yup, I usually play games like Counter-Strike as well as strategy titles.  
**E:** Right now, it's got to be Age Of Mythology, Ghost Recon, Doom 3, and Unreal III.

## GaX: Any parting words for aspiring Zoids hobbyists?

- E:** Zoids are really fun, and the Zoids community in Singapore is really very friendly and helpful. The important thing about customization is not about perfection, it's about having fun. Even if no one likes your customized Zoid model but you had fun...then the Zoids would have done their job!



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# comics fever

## Strikes Hong Kong!



Over 380,000 people attended the HK Comics Festival event that was held from 30 July to 3 August at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. Eager visitors to this event started lining up the night before, just to get the chance to be the first to enter the doors on 30 July.

The Animax booth was bustling with action from the very first day, as everyone was eager to meet up with the famed animators of Gundam and Inu Yasha, as well as feast their eyes on fantastic yoyo performances by Asia Pacific champion Spinworx Professional Yoyo Team from Singapore. Held on different days, the autograph sessions

with Mobile Suit Gundam planning manager Mr. Koichi Inoue and Inu Yasha planning producer Mr. Michihiro Suwa were undoubtedly the most popular with fans and other visitors. Even before the animators arrived, fans were already making a long queue to get their autographs on specially made Gundam standees. They waited patiently for the rare chance of meeting their idols and left happily with autographed premiums and memorable photographs.

We had a sweet interview with Inoue during the event, and here's a lowdown on our conversations with one of geniuses behind Gundam.

**Hi Inoue-san, tell us about your latest project.**  
It's called 'MS Igloo', a 3D/CGI animation, launched exclusive at Matsudo Gundam Museum in Japan.

**Your previous works have dealt with mainly mecha themes. Are there any plans to go into other genres of anime?**

Certainly! I would like to try my hands on cute (kawaii) type of anime/characters, which is targeted at kids of both genders.

**Are you a big fan of Gundam?**  
Definitely yes!

**Which mecha that has appeared in your works is your favorite? Why?**

'Rajin-Oh'. This series is specially targeted for kids. The characters are unique in such a way that they all can be viewed from a kid's point of view. So far, the series has received great reaction from the viewers.

**What kinds of columns do you write in Universe Century Mono Graph?**

Komono-Graph. 'Komono' actually means small gadgets in Japanese. I basically commented on weapons & gadgets used in the Gundam UC epic. I took the perspective of someone who actually lives in that imaginary UC world.

**Why do you think Japanese animation has such a lasting and international appeal?**  
There are predominantly 2 waves of major animation influence - America & Japan

#### American Cartoons

→ Skews towards the younger audience (e.g. productions from major studios).

→ Visually, the use of colors is very distinct as compared to Japanese anime.

→ The traits of the cartoon characters are usually clearly defined or portrayed in a straight forward manner (e.g. heroes vs. villains).

#### Japanese Anime

→ Not particularly skewed to any specific age groups, the range is wider (kids-teens-girls-adults).

→ Visually delicate and subtle colors are often used.

→ Tend to have more complex storylines & characters. The message put across may not be outright all the time & in some cases, not so clear-cut.

**In your opinion, what is the most interesting and rewarding part of your job?**

Viewing the first episode of a completed series gives me the thrill and excitement, and the privilege of being the first to watch the production before anyone else does.

**What are the upcoming titles to come out of Sunrise?**

'Ms Igloo', Mobile Suit Z Gundam animated movie version, Gundam Seed Destiny, and SD Gundam Force (released for the US).

**What is the direction of Sunrise as far as the Gundam series are concerned?**

A new and younger team of animators shall mainly do the new series/epics of Gundam, such as Gundam Seed. As for new Gundam series that are related to Universal Century (UC) projects, I would still be largely involved.



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September Issue Cover



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ORIGINAL



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02

The Sims 2  
(PC)



03

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